

Bivalve fisheries in Andhra Pradesh

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In India states like Kerala and Karnataka have a flourishing bivalve fishery driven by demand for bivalve meat. However, in states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu bivalve meat consumption is very negligible and demand is driven by the lime and shell craft industries only. Bivalves are locally known as "Gollalu" in Andhra coast with major species recorded being *Crassostrea madrasensis*, *Saccostrea cucullata*, *M. meretrix*, *Meretrix casta*, *Marcia opima*, *Paphia malabarica*, *Tegillarca granosa*, *T. rhombea* and *Perna viridis*. Mainly distributed along the shallow regions of Gostani estuary and Godavari estuary. In the Gostani estuary, the bivalve fishing grounds are Konadu, Moolaguddu, Nagamayypalem, Thottepalem, Chinnanagarama, Asipalem, and Gudivada. Craft used for the bivalve exploitation are Theppa and Nava. Usually fishermen groups with 2-4 members go in fibre boats (Theppa) with chisels and scoop nets for fishing in Gostani estuary. In the East Godavari regions like Kakinada, Yanam, Yetimoga, Pedavalasa, Dummulapetta, Chollangi etc fishing ground is about 4-8 km from the shore and located around the Hope Island which is about 4-5 km². Usually the fishermen families of about 2-6 members live in the boat itself and go for fishing in Godavari estuary. Fishing by women and children is through hand picking and dragnets. The estimated average annual landings of the bivalves during the study period 2015-2019 were 1095 tonnes and showed a decreasing trend. The estimated landings of bivalves during 2015 was about 1118 tonnes (2015) and 1431 t (2016) which decreased to 783 t in 2017.

Marketing and Utilization trends indicate that more than about 60% are exported for meat purpose, 30% used as a major ingredient of shrimp feed and the remaining for shell industry. Domestic consumption is negligible with Blood clams only favoured. The traditional shrimp farms also use dried and boiled clam meat to feed shrimps. Some fish farms were also using it to feed *Pangasius pangasius* and Pompano. In hook and line fishery It is used as bait for some species. Bivalve shells with attractive sculpture like blood clams are used by the ornamental shell craft industry. The marketing of these shells depends on the nearby states like Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Maharashtra and Telengana; besides the small scale exporters of Kakinada, Yanam, Guntur and other regions of the Andhra Pradesh. The agents are collecting shells from the fishers and selling to the different buyers based on demand. The marketing is mainly based at Chollangi landing centre and from Bheemli, Nagamayypalem areas from where the dead shells are transported by road. The shells are sold on basket basis with small plastic baskets weighing about 40-50kg each costing ₹800-1200 depending on the size of the shell (grade). The fishers are getting about ₹ 10-22 per kg only. The small scale industries are selling both the cleaned shells as well as lime powder to the dealers. Shells of the *Anadara* spp. are mainly used in the shell craft industry while rest are used by small scale industries for making lime.