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Dalit self-help group in Kerala reaps rich profit from cage fish farming

The SHG reaped a profit of Rs 2,73,000 from the 10-month farming by stocking 2,000 seeds of pearl spot



Pearl spot farmed by Puzhayoram self-help group in Maradu-Nettoor backwaters under the cage farming scheme offered by CMFRI being harvested on Thursday. (Photo | EPS)

KOCHI: Amidst the livelihood crisis created by the Covid induced lockdown, cage fish farming came as a blessing in disguise for a group of fish farmers belonging to the Scheduled Caste community in Ernakulam district. The self-help group named 'Puzhayoram' in Maradu harvested a yield of 600 kg of pearl spot from a 4x4m square-sized cage fish installed in Maradu- Nettoor backwaters. Cage farming was part of a special programme provided under the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). Marad Municipality Vice-chairperson Reshmi Sanil inaugurated the harvesting.

“The harvested fish was completely sold out on the spot itself and the self-help group reaped a profit of Rs 2,73,000 from the 10-month farming that was launched in October last year by stocking 2000 seeds of pearl spot”, said CMFRI principal scientist K Madhu. The fish attained an average growth rate of 380g with a 95% survival rate and was sold for Rs. 450 per kg, he said.

The CMFRI had provided the group with a cage, seeds, feed for the entire farming period, and other ancillary facilities free of cost, and the researchers from the institute guided the farmers during all the phases of the farming. “The Covid situation and lockdown had a cascading effect on the lives of the families in the region. The cage farming venture has helped them sustain their livelihood to a certain extent”, said Madhu. He said pen culture and biofloc fish farming were also in progress for the community in different parts of the state.