

Seaweed farming to boost economy and reduce climate crisis

Cultivation of seaweed, which is one of the natural methods to mitigate global warming, would help boost the economy and reduce the impact of climate crisis as well, said union fisheries secretary Jatindra Nath Swain.

Speaking at an interactive meeting with scientists of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) held at its headquarters in Kochi, Swain said the union government looks forward to developing a sustainable economy through highly prospective seaweed cultivation.

At a time when climate change is increasingly posing a major threat to human life across the globe, cultivating seaweed, which is one of the natural methods to mitigate the global crisis, would help boost the economy and reduce the impact of the climate crisis as well.

“An additional livelihood option, seaweed farming will play a major role in the socio-economic upliftment of traditional fishermen during this difficult time,” the secretary said.

CMFRI, in a release, said the union secretary has asked it to set up a seed bank of seaweeds to popularise the practice among the coastal region. “Marine scientists should come up with ways for capacity development to enhance seaweed cultivation on large-scale,” Swain said, adding that the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) has a special thrust for promotion of seaweed farming.

He was on a visit to Kerala to understand the issues and challenges being faced by the sector after taking over the portfolio four months ago. Apart from those in the Kochi headquarters, CMFRI scientists from various regional research stations across the country also attended the meeting.

Elaborating on the country’s ambitious plan in the marine fisheries sector, the Fisheries secretary said that India is eyeing doubling the seafood export in the next five years.

“The government is supportive of promoting cage fish farming, which is also an alternative source of income in a big way that would help the traditional fishermen to double their income,” Swain said and lauded the efforts of CMFRI to give a major boost to this practice across the coastal states.

Sea ranching initiatives, a practice of stocking seeds into the sea, of green tiger shrimps should be strengthened by extending it into more areas— as the practice by CMFRI has been proving a huge success in the Palk Bay for the past few years— for maintaining a sustainable stock of the species and their conservation, the top fisheries official said.

Flagging his concern on resource depletion and ecosystem degradation, Swain urged scientists to focus on ways to promote responsible fishing and to adopt appropriate mechanisms to improve sustainable fishing. PTI