



Fish farmers reap bumper harvest

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Adding colours to their Christmas celebrations, a group of farmers from the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities in the district has a bumper harvest of pearl spot (karimeen) and tilapia through their cage fish farming venture. The farmers reaped good catches from the two cage farming ventures at Nettoor and Ezhikkara. The eight-month-long cage farming was carried out under the schemes — scheduled caste sub plan (SCSP) and tribal sub plan (TSP)—of the central marine fisheries research institute (CMFRI).

A self-help group named 'Sreedevi', including 22 ST families in Thandassery Colony at Nettoor, harvested a



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yield of 600kg of pearl spot and 1,300kg of tilapia from four cages. While pearl spot attained a growth of an average 300g, tilapia got an average weight of 650g. Under the TSP scheme of CMFRI, the ST families were provided with cages, ancillary facili-

ties, fish seeds and feed.

Five SC families benefited from the cage farming carried out at Ezhikkara under the CMFRI's SCSP scheme as they managed to harvest 250kg of tilapia from one cage. A team of researchers from CMFRI led by K Madhu,

Rema Madhu and Rajesh N coordinated the cage farming ventures.

Under the SCSP scheme of the CMFRI, cage fish farming is being undertaken by members of the SC community across the country, and biofloc farming is aimed at extending the benefits of this scheme to those who do not have access to open waterbodies. The biofloc project is underway in Palakkad, Thrissur, Idukki, Kottayam and Kollam districts under CMFRI's guidance.

The tilapia fry were procured from MPEDA's hatchery in Vallarpadam.

Biofloc technology is a scientific method for high-density fish farming in a controlled environment in which fish wastes are converted into useful nutrients.