

## **Fisheries Institute Guides a Young Cage Fish Farmer in Winning an Award**

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The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute's (CMFRI) efforts to popularise its cage fish farming technology have been recognized, with a farmer affiliated with the institute receiving the prestigious 'Thozhil Shreshta' award instituted by the state labour department.

P M Dinil Prasad, 28, of Kannur, won the award for his outstanding performance in the fisheries sector. He has been engaged in cage fish farming under the supervision of the CMFRI. He quit his job in the Indian Army to pursue a career in cage aquaculture after being enticed by the method's prospects.

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Prasad received the award, which included a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a certificate, for his outstanding achievement in cage fish farming, which resulted in a good harvest of pearl spots in three and a half years.

This was made possible by the mariculture division of CMFRI, led by Dr Imelda Joseph, who provided regular training and guidance. He is currently farming 7,000 pearl spots in seven cages of 4X4m size and at least 150kg of yield is expected from each cage.

Prasad also runs a seed production unit for pearl spot and mussel farming in addition to cage fish farming. In addition, he offers consultation services to those interested in starting cage fish farming, such as cage fabrication, site selection, species identification, and so on.

Prasad's consultancy resulted in the establishment of approximately 75 cage culture units throughout the Malabar region. The young fish farmer attributed his success to his strong passion for cage fish farming and his determination.

*"At first, many people accused me of quitting a good job to start an aquaculture business." But, as the venture grew in success, they praised my efforts and willpower, and more young people approached him, wanting to emulate this model,"* he said, adding that he is grateful for CMFRI's assistance, which enabled him to use this technology to its full potential and secure his livelihood.

Covid's limitations did not dampen his spirit as he used social media to market his harvested crops. *"During the lockdown, social media platforms helped me a lot to reach the targeted consumers and sell the fish at a good price,"* Prasad said