



Inauguration of the harvest by Shri. K. Babu, Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries, Kerala

Cage Culture of Mullet in Cochin Backwaters- A Success Story

"Cage culture technology developed by CMFRI will be promoted to boost fish production" says Fisheries Minister, Government of Kerala

The cage culture technology developed by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) will be promoted under the *Matsya Samridhi* programme of the Government of Kerala to boost fish production in the state" said Sri. K. Babu, State Minister for Ports, Excise and Fisheries, Government of Kerala. He was inaugurating the harvest of cage farmed mullet *Mugil cephalus* at Pooyappilly, Chittattukara Panchayat of Ernakulum district. Since cage culture technology has been recently approved under the Centrally Sponsored Fisheries Development Scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture (Government of India), farmers can avail a subsidy of 40 %. The minister announced that the Government of Kerala is planning to utilize the opportunity in collaboration with CMFRI. He also said that the



Inaugural address by Shri. K. Babu, Hon.Minister for Fisheries, Govt. of Kerala



Dignitaries with harvested fish



Fishermen group with harvested fish

technology has good potential as an alternate livelihood option for the operators of the dip net units which are being removed by the Government for the expansion of state water navigation.

It is for the first time that the cage farming technology has been successfully demonstrated in farming of mullet *M. cephalus* in open backwater system of the State. The cage farming technology, developed and perfected by the scientists of CMFRI through continuous research efforts since 2007, had already been proved successful in open sea for growing high valued marine species like seabass, pompano, cobia and lobsters through multi-location trials conducted at different parts of the country.

The cage was operated in a PPP (Public Private Participation) mode, lead by a group of four local artisanal

fishermen families at Pooyappilly, Chittatukara Panchayat. The mullet fry collected from the wild were nursery reared in *hapas* erected in earthen ponds till it reached 25 g and above. After nursery rearing 5,500 fingerlings were stocked in the cage during January-February 2012. A six meter diameter HDPE floating cage designed by CMFRI was used for the demonstration. The total operational expenditure including cage maintenance and feed was ₹1.1 lakh. The mullet production was 1,650 kg worth ₹5 lakhs. The mean weight of the fish ranged between 385 g and 450 g.

On the occasion, Advocate V. D Satheesan, MLA, North Paravoor had expressed that based on the performance at Pooyappilly, the technology has immense scope for Kerala which is having lot of underutilized water bodies. Dr. B.

Meenakumari (DDG, Fisheries, ICAR) presided over the harvest inauguration. In her presidential address, DDG(Fy) indicated the wide scope prevalent for brackishwater cage culture in Kerala. Dr. G. Syda Rao, Director, CMFRI, in his welcome address highlighted the need for enhanced fish production through sustainable farming technologies. Mrs. Arunaja Thampi, President, Chittattukara Panchayat and Mrs. Mini Rajesh, Ward Member also expressed their willingness to co-operate with the research and demonstration activities of the Institute in the Panchayat. Dr. V. Kripa, Head, FEM Division, CMFRI proposed the Vote of Thanks.

The farmers led by Mr. Babu had expressed their satisfaction over the huge profit realized to them in a span of hardly seven months.

(Reported by Imelda Joseph, Mariculture Division, Cochin)



First haul of mullet