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# Kerala SC families reap bumper harvest from biofloc fish farming

## Our Bureau

Kochi

Giving a fillip to homestead aquaculture and nutritional security, a self-help group belonging to the scheduled caste community in Cheranalloor village near Kochi has reaped a bumper harvest from biofloc fish farming, an innovative aquaculture practice.

Legislator TJ Vinod inaugurated the harvest mela. On the occasion, the *Sreelekshmi* self-help group in the village reaped a good yield of Genetically Improved Farmed Tilapia (GIFT) with a better growth rate from a 5-diameter biofloc tank set up adjacent to their households. Aiming to transform the lives of the SC community by helping them become small-scale entrepreneurs in fish farming, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) introduced this venture to the families in the locality by extending to them all the support to undertake the biofloc farming.

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

With the harvested fish attaining a growth of 500 to 550g on average, the farmers expect a total of around 900 kg of fish with an income near

₹2 lakh by the completion of the fish harvest, which is done partially according to the demand. The farming was started in November last year by stocking 1,800 tilapia seeds.

The project is supported by the CMFRI, which provided the SHG all the assistance, including a biofloc tank with a volume of 23,500 litres of water, fish seeds, feeds and technical guidance under its Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP).

## REACHING OUT

A Gopalakrishnan, Director, CMFRI said the institute focuses on reaching its research output to the needy section of the society, including women and transgender people.

The CMFRI team monitored different phases of the farming regularly to ensure that fishes attained maximum growth. A water quality kit also was supplied to the SHG to maintain the required parameter, K Madhu, Principal Scientist of CMFRI who led the project said.

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 to extend the benefits of this scheme to those who do not have access to open water bodies, he said. This innovative fish farming is underway in Palakkad, Thrissur, Idukki, Kottayam and Kollam districts under CMFRI's guidance.