

Harmful algal blooms in Arabian Sea increasing, warns experts



Kochi, Feb 21 (IANS) Underlining that climate change poses a serious threat to the fisheries and aquaculture in the country, marine scientists have warned of increasing frequency and intensity of the harmful algal blooms (HAB) in the Arabian Sea.

Roughly a three-fold increase in HAB was reported during the period from 2000 to 2020, the experts said at an One Health

Aquaculture India workshop being organised by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) of the UK government's Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs and the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here.

The HAB are a leading cause of aquatic food-borne health risk to fish consumers and fish mortality that can potentially affect mariculture activities in particular and fisheries in general. Presenting the status of HAB in Indian waters, Dr Grinson George, Senior Programme Specialist of the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Dhaka said issuing early advisories are essential helping to shift the fish or plan early harvest in the mariculture. "Increased frequency and intensity of the HAB badly affect mariculture activities such as cage fish farming as it lead to fish kill," said George. He also said that aquaculture associated health issues and water-borne diseases among the farming community are on the rise, making the situation worse in the wake of extreme weather events such as floods, tropical cyclones, and receding coastlines.

The experts who spoke at the workshop also pointed out that anti-microbial resistance (AMR) is a growing threat to the health system across the globe. Aquatic food systems and value chain also contribute to the AMR risk through multiple ways, and they felt that there is a need to follow safe aquatic health management options to contain the menace. Examples from different countries on the role of communities in combating anti-microbial resistance were presented by Dr David Verner-Jeffreys, Principal Scientist at the CEFAS, UK.