

‘Mariculture, a promising biz opportunity’

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Cage fish farming in the open sea and coastal waters could yield an additional income of up to Rs 3 lakh per unit, says a study by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

CMFRI STUDY

The study examined the social, environmental, technical and economic aspects of 159 mariculture units such as cage farming, seaweed cultivation and Integrated Multi-trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) in six coastal states, including Kerala.



A PROMISING BUSINESS?

Mariculture has emerged as a promising business opportunity for India's coastal regions, offering decent income to coastal people even as extreme weather events like cyclones are leading to reduction of fishing days every year. IMTA's innovative practice,

which combines mussel or seaweed cultivation with cage fish farming, was found to generate higher profits of Rs 3.25 lakh per unit. Kerala exhibited higher profitability in coastal water cage farming compared to other coastal states, with nearly 40% of such units in the state generating an income ranging from Rs 2 lakh to 3 lakh per season.

The study titled 'Sustainable intensification of small-scale mariculture systems: Farm-level insights from the coastal regions of India' was published in the international research journal - Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems.

The study led by senior sci-

entist Shinoj Parappurathu highlighted that mariculture augmented employment and gender inclusion among the coastal communities across the country. Marine cage farming and IMTA generated 175-396 person-days of employment from one unit in a season lasting around eight months.

The CMFRI study also identified challenges in the sector, including the scarcity of quality seed and feed. Less than 50% of farmers received good-quality seeds for culture. Limited access to institutional credit to meet capital and operational cost was reported to be another major constraint in the sector.