

Kerala's women-led community fish farming attracts US students

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A delegation from the Michigan State University (MSU) in the US, which includes undergraduate students and faculty, was impressed with the community-based fish farming in Kerala and opined that it is an inspiring effort towards empowering rural women. The



team, which arrived in Kerala on July 12 as part of a student exposure-cum-training programme, was fascinated by the diverse range of entrepreneurial ventures spearheaded by women groups, said Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) principal scientist Shyam Salim.

The team visited Gothuruth, where women self-help groups have undertaken cage culture and bivalve farming. Multi-faceted activities of women cooperative agencies in the fisheries sector, like the Society for Assistance to Fisherwomen (SAF), garnered appreciation.

They were taken through the practical aspect of backyard farming at Njarackal and the pearl spot hatchery run by women at Alangad.

Led by Associate Dean of Faculty and Academic Affairs Prof Linda Racioppi and Prof Sejuti Dasgupta, the ten students pursuing Comparative Culture and Politics from MSU's James Madison College explored various aspects of fisheries, including marine capture, cage fish farming, Chinese fishing nets and fish markets and collected insights on livelihoods in the sector. The sea wall and the walkway constructed recently using the tetrapod in Chellanam also interested the students. They interacted with CMFRI director A Gopalakrishnan and heads of various divisions to learn about the research activities of the institute.

The visit was aimed at understanding the socio-economic aspects of the fisheries sector of the state to facilitate collaborative educational and research activities between the MSU and the CMFRI. This was the third such programme hosted by the CMFRI based on an existing MoU between the two institutes. The team travelled to Thiruvananthapuram and Idukki before returning to the US on July 27.