

US Students Impressed with Women-centred Entrepreneurial Ventures in Kerala's Fisheries Sector



A group of undergraduate students and faculty members from Michigan State University (MSU) in the United States have been impressed with community-based initiatives dominated by women in Kerala's fisheries sector. The US team, which was on a 15-day visit to the State as part of a student exposure-cum-training programme jointly organised by the university and ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here, was impressed by a diverse range of entrepreneurial ventures spearheaded by various women groups, including "Theeramythri" units and other self-help groups in villages. They witnessed women farmer groups engaged in cage culture and bivalve farming, and women entrepreneurs in value-addition.

Multi-faceted activities of women cooperative agencies in the fisheries sector such as the Society for Assistance to Fisherwoman (SAF) also left them with a positive impression of women empowerment in the State's fisheries sector, said an official press release. The students who were pursuing Comparative Culture and Politics from MSU's James Madison College explored various aspects of fisheries, including marine-capture fisheries, cage fish farming, Chinese fishing nets, and fish markets and also garnered insights on livelihoods in the sector. They also interacted with CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan and the heads of various divisions to learn about the research activities of the institute.

Shyam Salim, Principal Scientist at CMFRI who coordinated the programme, said procedures were under way to design collaborative research programmes, seminars, and workshops between the MSU and the CMFRI. "Climate change and local governance are the most important avenues for joint research programmes. Development of climate resilience and livelihood strategies for vulnerable communities such as fishermen community will be included the future work plan which is in discussion mode," he said.