

# Artificial reefs to come up in 3,477 fishing villages; 200 in Kerala

About 17-30% increase in catch observed at locations where reefs have been installed: CMFRI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

AS part of the efforts to improve the livelihood of fishermen and promote sustainable fishing, the Union government will install artificial reefs in 3,477 fishing villages across the country, including 220 villages in Kerala. The project is being implemented with the technical support of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

According to CMFRI, a 17 to 30% increase in catch was observed at the locations where the reefs have already been installed. The technology has been launched in 132 locations with a total area of 3.7 lakh sq m across the country, including Kerala under the leadership of CMFRI.

Five pre-stakeholder workshops were conducted in 42 villages in Thiruvananthapuram

Representational pic



## What is artificial reef?

An artificial reef is a structure, placed on the sea bed as a substitute for natural habitats. With a fixed scientific design, it functions as a self-sustaining production system

district from Tuesday to Friday to educated fishermen about the potential of artificial reefs in transforming the marine fishing landscape. Site identifi-

cation for the installation of reefs was finalised during the meetings held at Poonthura, Vettukad, Perumathura, Kayikkara and Vizhinjam fishing villages in association with the Kerala State Coastal Area Development Corporation Limited (KSCADC).

An artificial reef is a structure, placed on the sea bed as a substitute for natural habitats. With a fixed scientific design, it functions as a self-sustaining production system on the sea bed. The project has been undertaken under the Prime Minister's Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) scheme, with 60% funding from the Centre and 40% from the state governments.

In recent years, CMFRI has been installing artificial reefs in the coastal waters of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Kerala on an experi-

mental basis under the leadership of principal scientist Joe K Kizhakudan. The project helped enhance fish availability at low operation cost.

"CMFRI has developed protocols for site selection, design, fabrication, deployment and impact assessment of this innovative technology," said director A Gopalakrishnan.

"It will discourage bottom trawling in the near shore areas and help the marine environment regenerate which will be beneficial to small-scale fishermen," he said.

According to CMFRI, over 300 species coexist in a settled artificial reef habitat. The commercial varieties being attracted to the reef include breams, groupers, snappers, perches, cobia, sea bass, rabbit fishes, silver biddies, seer fish, barracuda, mackerel, trevallies, queen fishes etc.