



The artificial reefs were installed at Belake village near Bhatkal in Uttara Kannada. The artificial reefs after installation | Express

In a first, artificial reef installed at Bhatkal

It will help replenish fish populations, enhance overall health of ecosystems

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KARNATAKA on Sunday joined states like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in installing artificial reefs to boost fish production. To ensure fish culture and catch in the sea, the Department of Fisheries in association with the Union government has installed artificial reefs in the sea in Uttara Kannada.

The artificial reefs in pyramid or round shapes, meticulously crafted structures serve as crucial sanctuaries for marine life, actively replenishing fish populations and enhancing the overall health of ecosystems, were installed at Belake village near Bhatkal. It was done under the supervision of Minister for Fisheries and Port Development Mankal S Vaidya and Dinesh Kumar, director, Department of Fisheries.

Speaking about the project, Mankal Vaidya said that this scheme will be a milestone where these reefs will act as a

platform for fish, providing them with protection and breeding. "This will help fishermen in many ways. We heard about this project in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. We decided to implement it here. The chief minister agreed to fund the project. We have earmarked Rs 17.3 crore for this reason," he said. Accordingly, 56 places along the 320-km stretch of coastline have been identified to install reefs. "This reef is a cement concrete structure. It will be installed in 10-metre deep water in the sea. This will harbour the fish, which will feast on the algal bloom here and breed. We have identified about 25 places to install the artificial reefs," Bobbin Bopanna, Joint Director, Department of Fisheries, told Express.

Explaining about the reefs, Bopanna said that the activities of fisheries will start within three months of its installation. "We will identify sandy bottoms and install them there. We do not prefer the rocky areas. These places will be maintained

by fishermen by themselves who will dive in and clear if there is any blockage," he said. The scheme is part of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana. The Centre is joining hands with state governments to ensure sustainable resource management and biodiversity conservation.

Dr Joe Kizhakudan, principal scientist and head of ICAR Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Visakhapatnam, who conducted studies on advantages and disadvantages of artificial reefs stated that artificial reefs are placed on the seabed to enhance the growth of marine life, thus creating a natural setting conducive to promoting fish production. This programme, according to the Fisheries Department, boosts tourism by introducing snorkelling or scuba diving.

The state government agency, KRIDL has been entrusted with the work which is expected to boost tourism activities such as scuba diving and snorkelling.