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EARNING BY LEARNING AND DOING **

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (Farm Science Centre) for mariculture was established at Narakkal in December 1976 with a view to transfer the aquaculture techniques developed in the laboratory to the end users. Till date the Kendra has trained more than 1,300 farmers in Prawn and Fish culture. A follow-up survey to evaluate the impact of the training programme and the mode of utilisation of the technology among the trained farmers was conducted for the second time in 1981. The results indicated that 73% of the farmers have utilised the training in one way or another. This article, on the success story of a harijan youth, is one among the many to be published in MFIS.

.....OFFICER-IN-CHARGE, KVK, NARAKKAL

Mr.N.K.Sudhakaran, a harijan youth of Nikathithara house, Narakkal is an agriculture labourer. He is aged 28, married and with a daughter. His family is put up in a tiled house in a ten cents plot amongst prawn filtration fields, not far away from the Government Fish Farm, Narakkal. Sudhakaran, as professed by his ancestors, has been deeply involved in the traditional system of 'Pokkali' rice cultivation and subsequent prawn filtration in the fields of his landlord.

Way back in 1979, one of his well-wishers, who had undergone one month's training in Prawn and Fish culture from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Narakkal had an opportunity to casually discuss with Sudhakaran the merits of scientific prawn culture from what was learned and seen during the training programme. Sudhakaran felt sorry for his friend and his remark at that time was that his

friend has been brain-washed by the KVK. This harijan youth believed that the scientific prawn culture programme was a highly expensive operation and that only big landlords and moneyed farmers could do it.

In those days, 'naran', (*Penaeus indicus*) culture was just on the move and farmers were suspicious of that operation. The results from two neighbouring canals, where 'naran' culture was conducted made Sudhakaran think and though with hesitation decided to enter into the trade. Thus, he collected some guidance from his friend and stocked a nearby canal of 0.2 ha with 15,000 'naran' seeds. After about three months, the canal was harvested and to his disappointment nothing

**Presented by K.N.Rasachandra Kartha, KVK, Narakkal with permission of N.K.Sudhakaran, Nikathithara House, Narakkal.



except few kg of *Tilapia* and *Metapenaeus dobsoni* (Thelly) could be obtained.

With the failure of the maiden attempt, Sudhakaran visited the KVK and narrated the whole story. He was advised by the staff to undergo the training course and was selected for the 33rd course of 15 days duration.

After successful completion of the training programme from 8th to 24th November 1979, he fixed a minislucce gate in the leased canal, physically eradicated the predatory animals and stocked it again with 18,000 numbers of 'naran' seeds, collected from nearby backwater areas. Being badly in need of money, the canal had to be harvested after 61 days of culture operation. To his surprise, he could get 136 kg of 'naran' which was sold for Rs. 1,632.00 at the rate of Rs. 12.00 per kg. (Sudhakaran says that the market value of prawns on



that occasion was the lowest). Taking into account the effort expended by him and also the cash down payment, the total expenditure worked out to Rs. 1,050.00. Thus he could earn a net profit of Rs. 582.00

Encouraged by this, he determined to continue the programme. During January 1981, Sudhakaran leased in a bigger canal of 0.6 ha and after preparing it, stocked with 60,000 numbers of 'naran' seeds, brought from Puthuvaippu. After waiting for 2 months, the stock was partially harvested for bigger prawns and 60 kg of 'naran' valued at Rs. 1,500.00 was cast-netted. Subsequently on 14th April, 1981, the final harvest was conducted in which 200 kg of 'naran' valued at Rs. 3,420.00 was realised, bringing the total income to Rs. 4,920.00 from a single culture operation. The net income to Sudhakaran was Rs. 3,400.00. He had to surrender the canal back to the landlord as the lease period was to expire on the last week of April.

Mr. Sudhakaran is at present fully engaged in 'naran' farming. When contacted for details of his recent harvest, he had a word of request that some arrangement may be made by the KVK or any other government agencies for the timely supply of 'naran' seeds. According to him, if this is implemented, it would go a long way in the full utilisation of the entire canal water system, hitherto lying idle amongst the coconut groves of Vypeen island.

Literate, with a pass in VII standard, Sudhakaran operates an account in the local bank at present. He is thankful to the KVK for bringing him to the present status where he has a place in the society.
