



Director General holding a harvested lobster

Empowerment of *Sidi* tribals of Gujarat through cage mariculture

A TSP fructification by CMFRI

On 13th April 2013, CMFRI elated the spirit of one of the primitive tribes of India, the 'Sidi', by successfully harvesting the seacage farms off-Veraval and handing over the produce and the seacage farm assets to tribal community. The harvest of the seacage farm established by the CMFRI off-Veraval for the tribals was inaugurated by Dr. S. Ayyappan, Secretary DARE and Director General, ICAR, New Delhi. The farm was established by the CMFRI under the Tribal Sub Plan outlay of the Institute for 2012-13 for the benefit of 20 selected families of the *Sidi* tribe in Veraval and Talala of Junagadh district through a cooperative society of the tribals as a livelihood support to the tribal community.

After 110 days of culture, the farm yielded an estimated production of 2.5 t of lobsters which was sold at a price range of Rs. 1000 - 1200/kg based on the size group of the lobsters and 300 kg of cobia. The farm assets worth about 33 lakh rupees and the produce valued about 26 lakh rupees at the prevailing market price was handed over to the 'Sidi' tribals by the Director General, ICAR on 13th May 2013. The august presence of Dr. N.C. Patel, VC of JAU, Junagadh, Shri Darbar IAS, Commissioner of Fisheries, Gujarat, Dr. Madan Mohan, ADG (M. Fy.), Dr. T. K. Srinivasa Gopal Director CIFT, Dr. Mishra, Director, DGR, Junagadh and several farmers, entrepreneurs,

fishermen and Press people made the moment precious. The tribals led by Mr. Hasin Bhai expressed their gratitude for ICAR and expressed that this was the first Government agency that has helped for their upliftment in their history. Dr. S. Ayyappan complimented the CMFRI staff led by Dr. G. Syda Rao, Director and Veraval RC staff for this illustrious cause of integrating technology for social benefit of tribal community and hoped for more initiation in this direction by several other ICAR Institutes. In the harvest program, Director General, Dr. S. Ayyappan released a book on Handbook of Marine Prawns of India published by CMFRI.





Fatted lobsters from the sea cages of Veraval



Dignitaries with the beneficiary families

The endeavour of CMFRI is lauded as a novel initiative, as it involves not just provision of a high end livelihood to one of the primitive tribal group but also made these tribals the custodians and mentors of a promising technology which is inevitable for the existence of the coastal population in the long run in view of the dwindling catch share and vulnerability of the coastal areas to

climate change. The tribal community members who were marginal labourers with an average daily earning of less than Rs. 150/day would now earn nearly Rs. 810 per day during the crop period of 115 days in addition to winning the farm assets handed over to them for continued farming in the coming crop seasons. The capacities of the tribals have been built with adequate training on all aspects of the technology from fabrication of the seacages to regular monitoring and best practices for higher yield. Hence, the initiative of the CMFRI would go a long way in boosting their overall socio-economic status.

The farm which was a centre of attraction to the fisheries fraternity of the state of

Gujarat, in addition to having functioned as a platform for research on key issues in open sea farming, have also been used for training other stakeholders in the state such as the fishermen from various coastal districts, officers of the state Department of Fisheries, fisheries and marine sciences students, NGO workers, CSR teams of corporate bodies in the region etc. This is yet another example of success of open seacage farming technology developed by the Institute and a testimony to the potential of developing sea farming as a major source of fish production in Gujarat owing to its vast maritime resources spread over 1600 km long coastline.

(Reported by Veraval RC)



Fisheries Managers, ICAR Scientists, Sidi tribals with DG and the Director



Director General holding the harvested lobsters



Marine cage farm at Veraval sea Somnath