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IA-6 MOLLUSCAN MARICULTURE PRACTICES IN INDIA

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The farming of bivalve molluscs especially pearl oysters, mussels, oysters, clams and hatchery techniques for their seed production of mussels, edible oysters and pearl oysters have been developed in India during 70's. The major technological achievement in bivalve mariculture has been the indigenously developed method for the culture and production of pearl from the Indian pearl oyster *Pinctada fucata* and this technology is attaining more and more attention among the entrepreneurs. The mussel culture method is perfected in ropes suspended from rafts and long-lines along the coastal waters of 3-10 m depth realm. The production rates that varied from 5-12 kg/m rope/5-6 months are very impressive and proved to be economically viable. Recent success achieved in largescale mussel farming in estuaries are worth mentioning. In addition, an indigenous technology is developed for edible oyster (*Crassostrea madrasensis*) culture in brackishwater areas. Its production rate per hectare is 10t/ha/5-8 months. Off bottom culture in stake and long-line, rack and ren (rack culture) on strings yielded high rate of production per hectare with natural spat settled on oyster shell strings as the source of seed. Apart from these technologies, seed production and culture of blood clam *Anadara granosa*, short neck clam *Paphia malabarica*, venerid clams *Meretrix meretrix, M. casta* and *Mercia opima* have also been developed for commercial practices. The techniques for rearing of Sacred Chank *Xancus pyrum*; seed production of abalone *Haliotis varia*, *Chicoreus virgineus* and *Babylonia* spp., were also successfully attempted in India. Breeding techniques of spineless cuttlefish *Sepiella inermis* was developed and several generations are produced in the hatchery system. Half-pearl production in the abalone was also achieved very recently.

Consequent to the development of these technologies, the efforts made in the transfer of technology to the end users through various training and extension programmes created the awareness of the techno-economic feasibility of these culture methods to the public. The efforts made in the recent times along Kerala and Karnataka coasts to test the suitability of different ecosystems for bivalve mariculture had a very positive impact on the culture of molluscs along the coastal waters through group farming or co-operate farming.