

# Window pane oyster collection - an alternative means of income for fisherwomen of Kudgaon, Raigad, Maharashtra

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Along with fisheries related activities, fisherwomen of Kudgaon, 6 km south of Dighi in Raigad district of Maharashtra, recently started collection of Mollusc shells (window pane oyster; *Placuna placenta*) from the intertidal zone. There is great demand for these shells by petroleum



Fig. 1. Woman engrossed in sorting and cleaning of window pane oyster after collection by thermocol raft



Window pane oyster collection activity being carried at community level along eustarine area of Kudgaon

related industries for capping and plugging the drilled holes that are left after oil exploration surveys. These shells are also used in handicraft industry. There are about 305 fisher families staying in Kudgaon village. About 80% of the village women have started collecting these shells (Fig. 1). Each

shell collector travels 5 km up and down using specially made thermocol raft and collect shells daily by hand picking. Locally these sea shells are known as “Kachga” (Fig. 2). The collected shells are sold to the merchants at a rate of ₹ 6/kg. Each women collect on an average about 12-15 kg shells from the shore. During lowest spring tide, they are able to collect up to 25 kg. On an average, a woman makes ₹ 60-75 per day from the shells she collects. The survey conducted under NAIP project “strategies to enhance adaptive capacity to climate change in vulnerable regions” reveals that, after Dighi port construction, the nearby area of Kudgaon village has witnessed abundance of windowpane oyster. At present, the collection of windowpane oyster has become an alternative source for income of the fisherwomen in this region.



Cleaning process of window pane oyster in the intertidal area during low tide



Fig. 2. Close view of window pane oyster



Geo-coordinated and Geo-referenced Map showing fishing village where Window Pane oyster collection activity is being carried out