

CMFRI establishes sea cage farm off Veraval waters for the 'Sidi' tribals of Gujarat

The CMFRI, through the Regional Centre, Veraval have established the first of its kind Sea Cage Farm in the sea off Veraval for the Primitive Tribal Group of Gujarat 'Sidi' as a livelihood development programme under the institutes' Tribal Sub Plan outlay 2012-13. The farm comprising of 20 circular cages having 5m diameter made of G.I. pipes is the largest sea cage farm established in an exposed sea area ever since the sea cage farming research initiated in India by CMFRI in 2007. The cages are moored individually with single point anchor made of SS chain connected to combination rope gabions filled with river stones. Anchor deployment was done basing a barge installed with JCB crane hired for the purpose. The farm is located at off Marine Police Station, Patan, Veraval and is half a kilometre away from sea shore and nearly one kilometre away from the

Veraval fishing harbour.

The programme has been carried out with the association of the Bharat Adimjuth Mandali, Talala, a registered society of the 'Sidi' tribals of

Junagadh District. The members of the Society as already been trained in the sea cage farming by the CMFRI is undertaking farming activities under close supervision of the Scientists of Veraval RC. The farm is being stocked with juveniles of mud spiny lobster, *Panulirus polyphagus* having an average body weight of 70g, collected from various coastal villages of Gujarat, mainly Bhavnagar and Amreli districts in the south Sauashtra coast, where it comes as a bycatch of 'Wada' nets, a common gillnet used in the intertidal areas. Juvenile lobsters landed as bycatch by the bottom trawlers of Veraval are also collected for stocking in the cages for on growing to qualify it for export i.e. 150g body weight. Few cages are also stocked with Cobia seeds provided by the Marine Fish Hatchery, Mandapam RC of CMFRI



Fabrication of cages

and Grey mullet *Mugil cephalus* collected from some of the creek areas in the vicinity like that in Diu and Sutrapada. The sea farming experience of the 'Sidi' tribals and their involvement in all aspects of sea cage farming right from cage fabrication to net mending and mounting, mooring preparation, deployment and farm management etc in addition to providing a quality livelihood would also make this primitive tribals a key community in the spread of sea cage farming technology in Gujarat, thereby improving their social status in the State.

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Feeding in progress



Stocking of juveniles of spiny lobsters