

VALUE CHAIN IN MULLET FARMING IN KERALA: SCIENTIFIC GAPS AND POTENTIAL

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INTRODUCTION

- Unpredictable production pattern and widespread disease outbreak in shrimp aquaculture leading to high momentum in brackish water fin fish farming
- Mullet and Pearl spot – The premium choice owing to high price and market demand
- Of late Pearl spot seed production coming up effectively following the traditional and modified hatchery methods
- Complete dependence of Mullet fry's from the Sea due to nonexistence of commercial hatcheries

STATE OF ART MULLET SEED COLLECTION

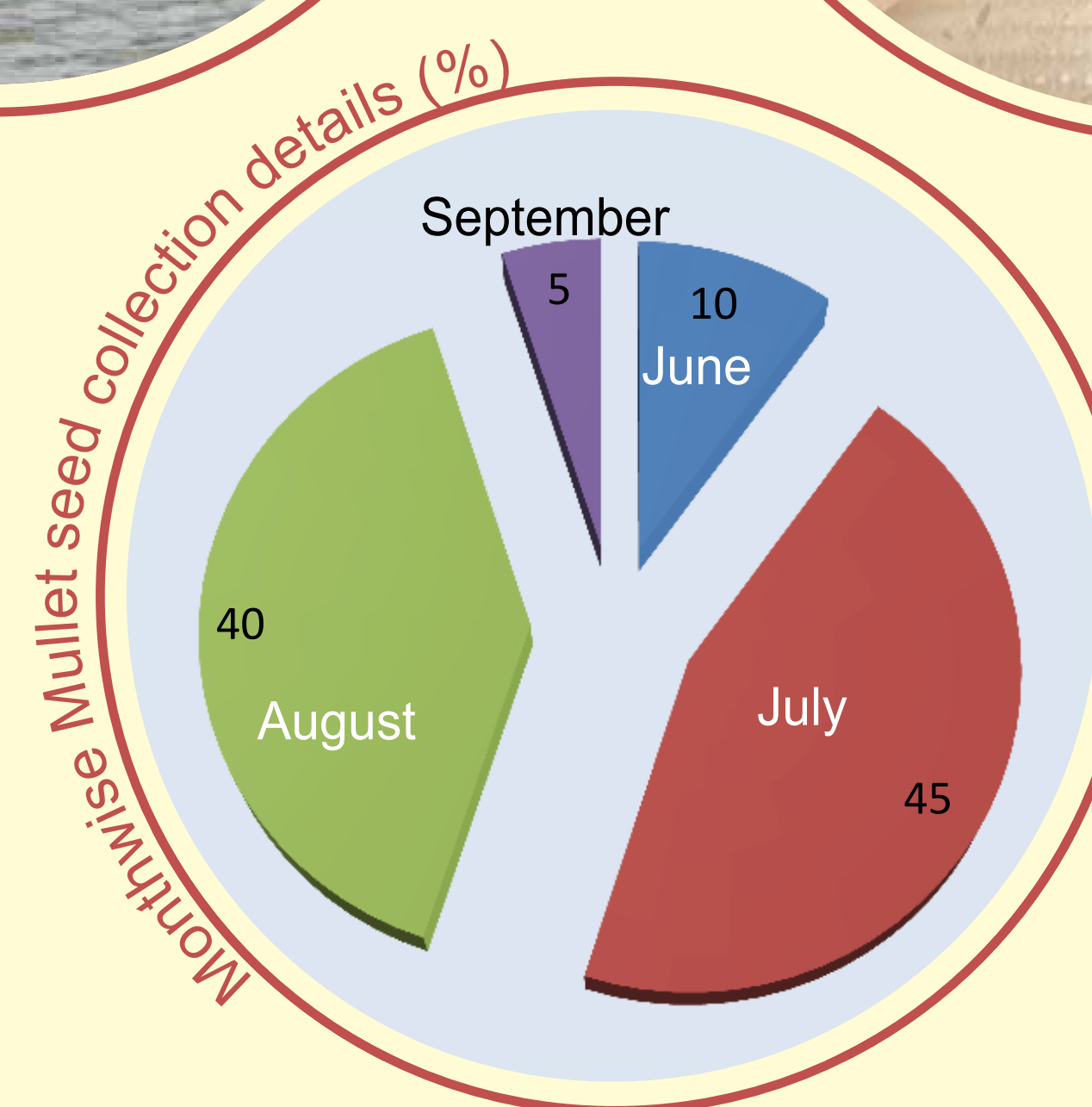
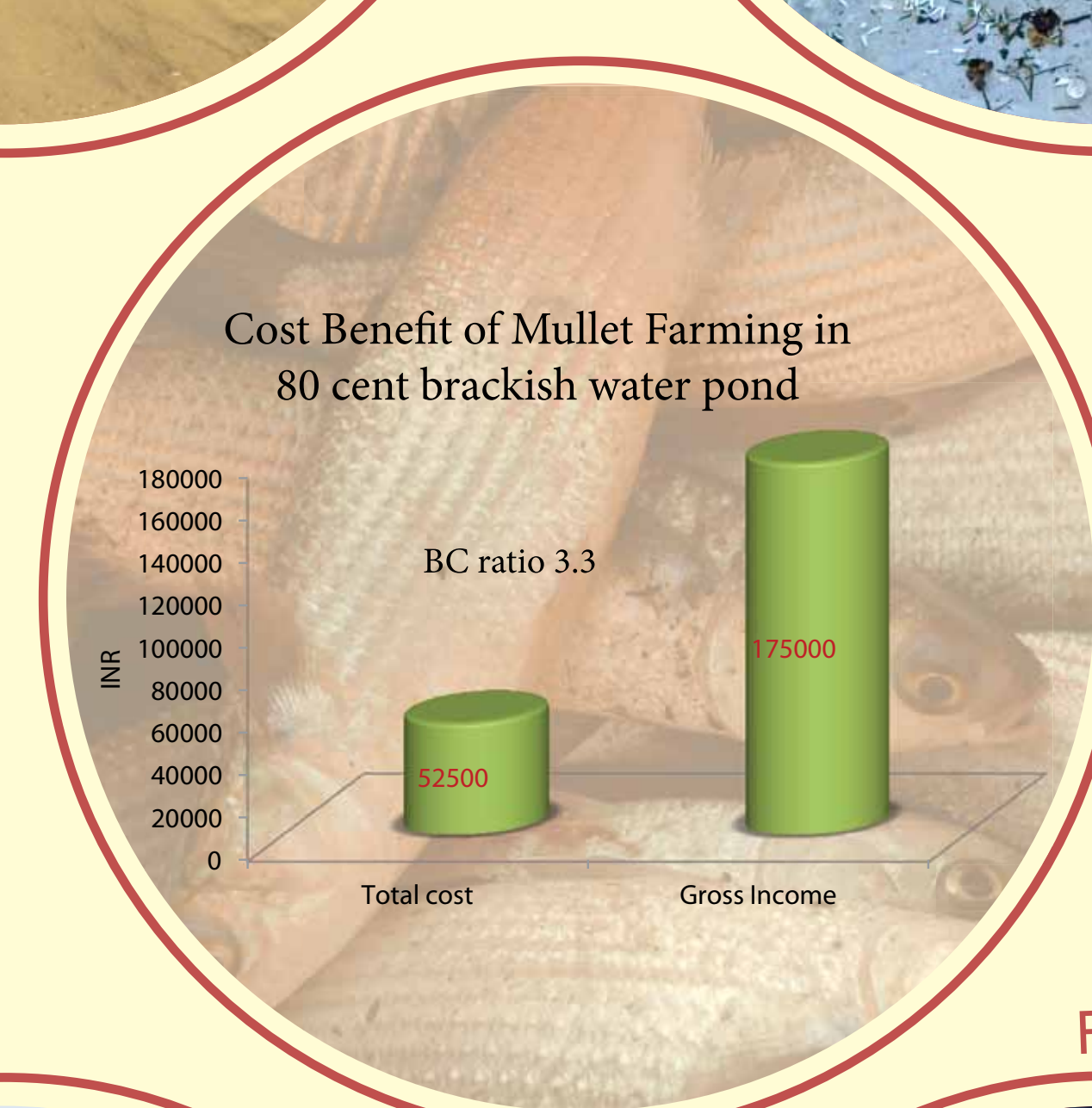
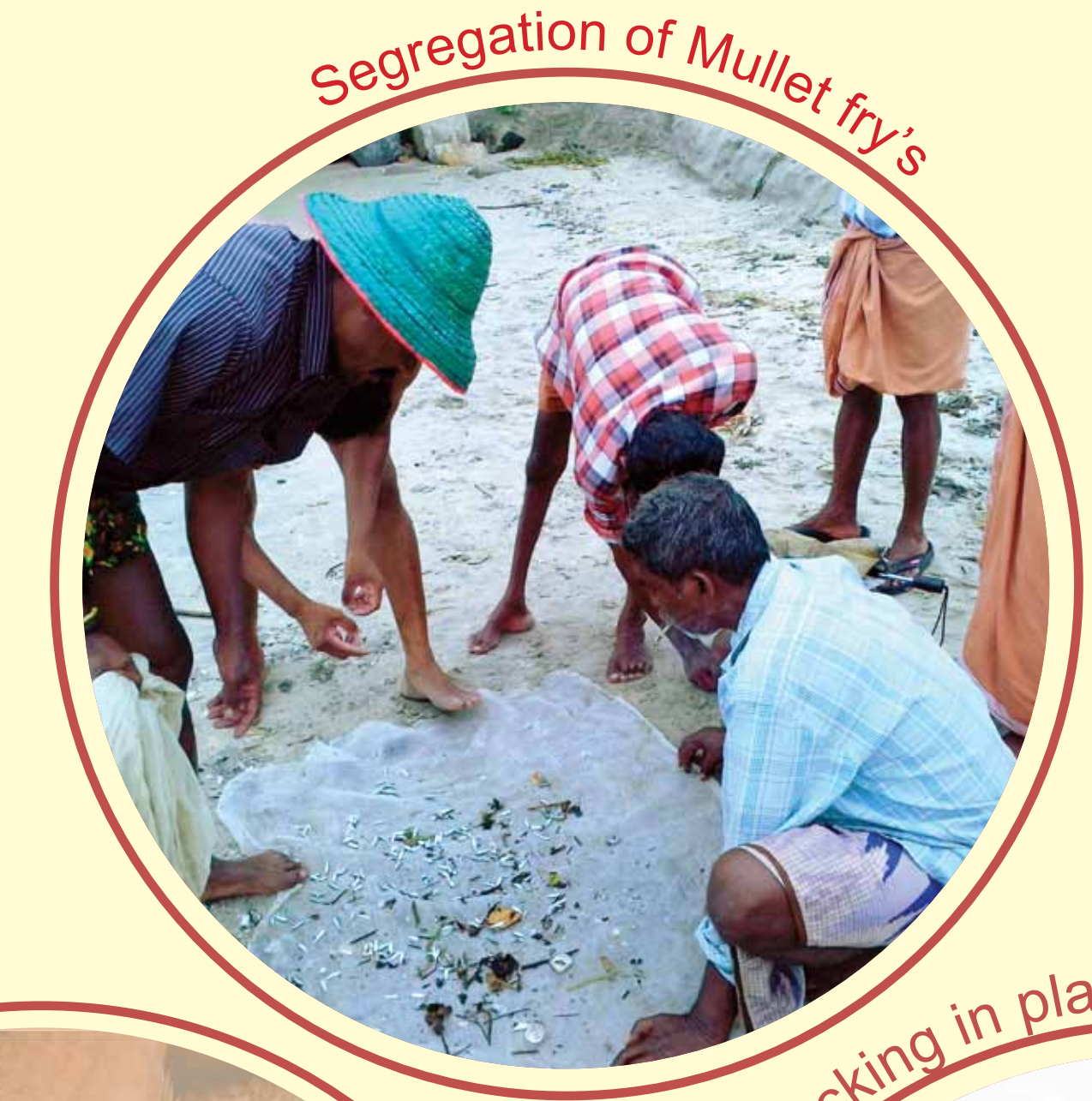
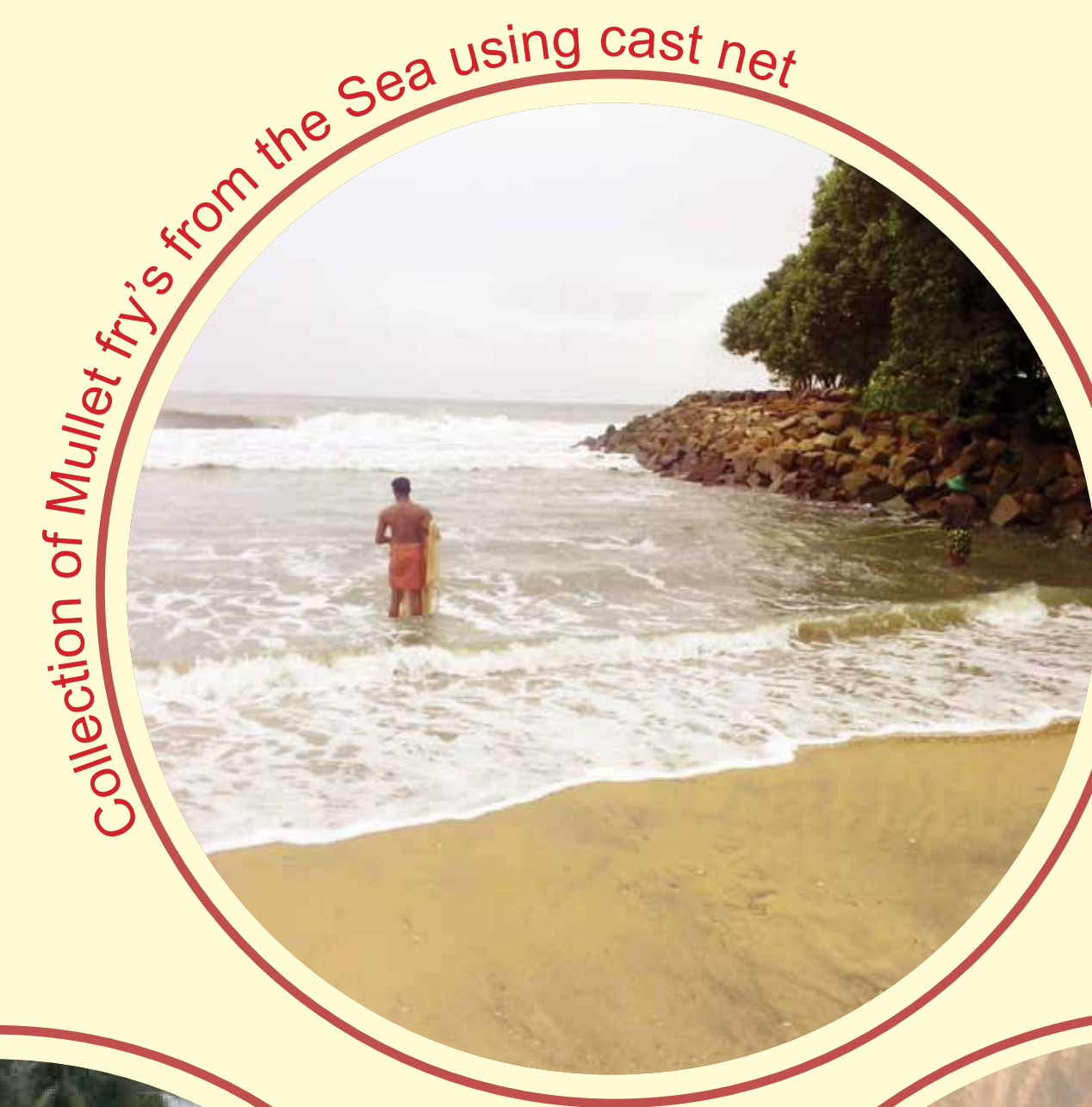
- Existing pattern - wild collection of Mullet (*Mugil cephalus*) fry's from the Sea
- Wild collection by 30-40 traditional fisher folk from Vypin region, Ernakulam during Monsoon season
- Remarkable exhibition of indigenous know-how and specific skills in collection and identification of Mullet in fry stage
- Traditional and ecofriendly practice of segregation and restocking of other sp. fry's collected along with Mullet fry by the fisher folk
- Collection by a group of three to four falls in the range 20,000 to 40,000 per season
- Last season saw the collection and supply of around 13 lakhs seeds

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE SECTOR

- High mortality rate of fry's due to unscientific stocking and transportation
- Absence of Scientific know-how among the fisher folk regarding initial larval feeding
- Price fluctuations due to absence of sufficient stocking space and scientific know-how of proper maintenance - price got reduced from INR. 7.00 to INR. 4.00 per seed during last season
- Exploitation and profiteering by middlemen with sufficient stocking space
- Unhealthy competition among the collection groups resulting in loss of profit
- Absence of platform for collective marketing and organized action
- Absence of data base regarding wild fry collectors and seasonality of seed availability among the fish farmers
- Lack of commercial seed production hatcheries

INTERVENTIONS TO BRIDGE SCIENTIFIC AND TRADITIONAL KNOWHOW AND PRACTICE

- Skill training for nurturing and caring fish fry's in the initial stage to enhance the rate of survival
- Development of larval stage specific formulated feed and demonstration
- Creation of centralized facilities for making seed banks of Mullet fry's near by the seed collection area



- Conscientisation on the potential of collective marketing among the groups and formation of federation for collective action
- Creation of database of traditional wild fry collectors and documentation of methodology and seasonality of seed collection for fish farmers, policy makers and scientific community
- Focused action for establishing hatcheries by the R&D institutes

WAY FORWARD

- Ensuring legal measures for balanced and responsible seed collection
- Balancing wild seed collection with hatchery production for ensuring sustainable Mullet farming



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