

CMFRI develops captive breeding tech for high-value marine ornamental fishes

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The aquarium business is set to get a major boost with ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute developing captive breeding technologies of two high-value marine ornamental fishes — Azure damsel and Ornate goby.

Scientists of the Vizhinjam Regional Centre of the institute developed and standardised seed production technologies for these highly sought-after marine ornamental fish species.

This is expected to open up prospects for aquarium enterprises and marine ornamental fish aquaculture in the country, B Santhosh, Head of the Vizhinjam Regional Centre of CMFRI,



DIVING INTO PROFITS. The high demand and low production costs of ornamental fish make it a lucrative opportunity for entrepreneurs

said. The high demand and market value of these fishes, coupled with the relatively low cost of production, make it an attractive venture for aspiring entrepreneurs.

PROFITABLE VENTURE

The economic feasibility study proved that a medium-

scale seed production unit with an annual production of 24,000 juveniles would fetch an annual income of around ₹12 lakh. Both species are desirable with their beauty, vibrant colours, and captivating aquarium behaviour.

Azure damsel is a vibrant reef-associated fish with

bright blue and yellow colours. Its market value is around ₹350 per fish in India and \$15-\$25 internationally.

Ornate goby, a favourite in marine aquariums, is admired for its striking colours, intricate patterns and curious behaviour. Its pectoral fins, marked with five vertical rows of white dots, add to its charm. This hardy species also helps maintain tank cleanliness by sifting sand.

A marketable-sized (5-8 cm) fish costs around ₹250 in India while online retail trade price in international markets is \$15-\$30.

Santhosh said the development would unfold new avenues for sustainable production of these fish, reducing pressure on wild populations and contributing to the conservation of delicate coral reef ecosystems.