

CMFRI project boosts black clam output in Vembanad

Our Bureau
Kochi

A black clam regeneration initiative by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CMFRI) has yielded encouraging results in Vembanad Lake, with production reaching seven to eight times the quantity of the stocked seed.

The success of the stock enhancement project was marked by a harvest festival following a 12-month culture period after five tonnes of clam seed were relaid in a

one-hectare area at Vadakkumkara in Alappuzha district.

The black clam (*Villorita cyprinoides*), one of Vembanad Lake's most important fishery resources, accounts for more than 80 per cent of India's total clam resources.

DECLINING RESOURCES

It directly supports the livelihoods of more than 6,000 families, while nearly twice as many depend on allied activities linked to clam fishery. The initiative assumes significance amid a sustained decline in Vembanad's clam

resources due to intensive exploitation and changing environmental conditions.

According to CMFRI estimates, the black clam catch in the region fell from a peak of 75,592 tonnes in 2006 to 45,601 tonnes in 2024, a decline of nearly 40 per cent.

Under the project, five tonnes of black clam seed were stocked in a one-hectare area in September last year. At harvest, the clams showed good growth and a survival rate of around 80-90 per cent.

The harvested stock was equivalent to seven to eight times the quantity of seed

initially stocked.

Production from the one-hectare area is expected to reach around 40 tonnes, highlighting the potential of planned clam stock enhancement to replenish the resource base.

SUPPORTING FISHING COMMUNITIES

The project was implemented with 100 per cent subsidy for Scheduled Caste communities under the Union government's Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP), with technical guidance from CMFRI and in collaboration with the Thaikkattussery

Black Clam Co-operative Society.

CMFRI Director Grinson George said the initiative demonstrated how scientific regeneration could help replenish declining clam resources while providing sustained livelihood support to fishing communities.

"The successful outcome highlights the potential of scientific intervention to combine resource regeneration, ecosystem recovery and sustained livelihood support for local communities," said CMFRI Senior Scientist Vidya R, who co-ordinated the project.