

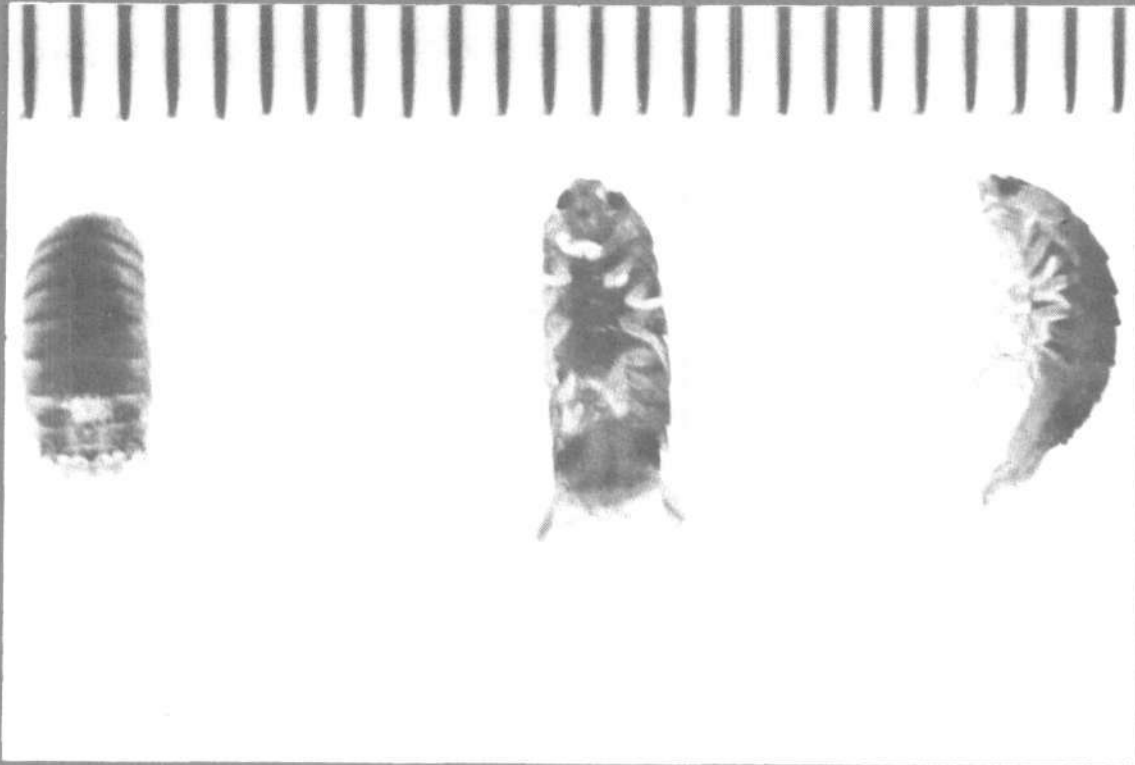


समुद्री मात्स्यकी सूचना सेवा

MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE

No. 131

AUGUST 1994



तकनीकी एवं TECHNICAL AND
विस्तार अंकावली EXTENSION SERIES

केन्द्रीय समुद्री मात्स्यकी CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES
अनुसंधान संस्थान RESEARCH INSTITUTE
कोचिन, भारत COCHIN, INDIA

भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

EVALUATION OF GROUP DISCUSSION ON DEVELOPING OYSTER CULTURE IN KERALA

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Edible oyster presents good farming potential in Kerala in view of the conducive ecology and manpower availability. With the objective of creating awareness among the R&D agencies and fishing and fish farming communities about the oyster farming technology and gathering opinions regarding its prospects, a group discussion was organised by the Molluscan Fisheries Division of CMFRI. As the technology transfer function is vested with the extension personnel of the Socio-economic Evaluation and Technology Transfer Division of CMFRI, a systematic evaluation of the programme was conducted by the Division to quantify opinions and suggestions and to list out the constraints anticipated in taking up the technology which would be helpful in developing suitable TOT strategies. The information was collected using a structured questionnaire and the findings of the evaluation are reported here.

Participant's profile

From among the R&D agencies in fisheries and the fishermen community a total of 77 persons attended the programme. The R&D agencies included State Department of Fisheries, CIFT, IFP, BFFDA, MPEDA, Kerala Agricultural University, Matsyafed, NABARD and nationalised banks and the target group organisations namely Matsyamahilavedi and Chellanam Village Prawn Farmers Forum. A questionnaire was prepared both in English and Malayalam and was distributed to the participants depending upon the knowledge of language. Fiftyfive persons gave their responses. The majority of the participants from R&D agencies belonged to the age group of 30-50 years with post graduate level of education.

They were associated with research and development work in fisheries including administration. The members of fishing community were in the age group of 20 - 45 with educational level upto high school. They were engaged in occupation such as fishing and fishery related activities, non-fishery related trades including agriculture and homemaking.

Objectives of the participants

The objectives of the participants regarding the group discussion were to gain more knowledge about oyster farming, to gain awareness, to extend the knowledge to the fishing community, to examine the possibilities of taking up as well as promoting the technology, to develop schemes based on the technology and development of value added products.

Impressions on the programme

The impressions of the participants on different aspects of the programme gathered on a four-point scale are given in Table 2. The adequacy scores for each aspect such as subject matter, relevance, coverage of topics, method and duration of presentation, group climate, freedom of asking questions and chances of clearing doubts was high for the officials and medium for the fishing community. The participants belonging to the fishing community felt that the programme had blocks in communication which included heterogenic nature of the group, use of English, inadequate representation of coastal communities, briefness and quickness in presentation and difficulty in taking down notes. The suggestions for improvements included separate

TABLE 1. *Participant's objectives of attending the programme (number of respondents)*

Sl. No.	Objectives	R & D officials	Fishing community	Total
1.	To gain more knowledge	17	13	30
2.	To gain awareness	13	13	26
3.	To extend the knowledge to the fishing community	11	11	22
4.	To examine the possibilities of taking up/promoting the technology	7	14	21
5.	To develop schemes based on the technology	7	—	7
6.	To develop value added products	7	5	12

TABLE 2. *Participant's impressions on the programme*

Sl. No.	Programme component	Average adequacy score		Overall
		R & D Officials	Fishing community	
1.	Subject matter	3.70	3.75	3.70
2.	Relevance	3.60	3.10	3.46
3.	Coverage of topics	3.60	1.79	2.94
4.	Method of presentation	3.40	2.60	3.16
5.	Duration	3.50	3.10	3.42
6.	Group climate	3.50	3.40	3.45
7.	Freedom of expression	3.90	3.10	3.60
8.	Chances of clearing doubts	3.70	3.25	3.53

Maximum score = 4

programmes for officials and the target group, presentation of model project reports, more information on economics, post harvest technology and marketing and exhibition of live oysters and working models.

Factors favourable for oyster culture

The most encouraging factor favouring oyster farming in Kerala is availability of water spread areas and occurrence of oyster in nature. Acceptability as food and marketing possibilities were also foreseen by them. Table 3 gives the factors favouring oyster farming and the percentage of respondents.

Constraints involved in oyster farming

In the light of the lectures, audio-visual aids, exhibitions and discussions as well as the experience of some of the members in the group in oyster farming the following constraints were anticipated. They included complexity of the innovation, nonavailability of spat, interference

with traditional fishing and navigation, finance, lack of suitable holdings and pollution. Table 4 gives the rank order of the constraints.

Suggestions for development of oyster farming

The participants from Quilon district observed that the water spread area from Dalavapuram to Pallicod presented high potential for oyster culture owing to the availability of spat. The suggestions for introducing and promoting the technology were the following :

- * Organising extension programmes such as group discussions and seminars in coastal and brackishwater areas
- * Establishing demonstration farms involving the target group and training them in the technology including processing
- * Assuring spat availability
- * Motivating clientele for group action
- * Involving women from fishing house-

TABLE 3. Factors favouring oyster cultures^a

Sl. No.	Factor	R & D Officials	No of respondents	
			Fishing community	Total
1.	Availability of water spread area	21	8	29
2.	Occurrence of oyster in nature	17	10	27
3.	Acceptability as food	12	12	24
4.	Marketing potential	12	8	20
5.	Seed availability	9	6	15
6.	Ease of adoption	10	4	14

TABLE 4. Constraints in taking up the technology

Sl. No.	Constraint	R & D Officials	No of respondents	
			Fishing community	Total
1.	Complexity of the technology	16	15	31
2.	Inteference with traditional fishing and navigation	17	10	27
3.	Financial	4	18	22
4.	Pollution	12	6	18
5.	Non-availability of spat	10	8	18
6.	Condition of the sea	10	7	17

holds in technology transfer

- * Giving publicity through mass media
- * Developing entrepreneurship based on the technology
- * Providing financial subsidy for inputs
- * Preparing model bankable schemes for the use of development agencies
- * Creating awareness on the food value of oyster
- * Exploring the demand for the byproduct namely calcium carbonate
- * Combining the farming of oyster with other aquaculture activities

The group discussion as an extension method is used to help develop a view point about trends in the society and help identify problems and suggest solutions. It gives opportunity to influence participants behavior, help people assimilate knowledge, give opportunities to ask questions, to relate the new information to their

knowledge and clear doubts and formation of opinions. The above group discussion on oyster farming has helped in fulfilling all these objectives to a great extent. Fishermen from Chellanam village who attended the programme have suggested a locality in Kattiparambu area in the village for demonstrating oyster farming. The fishermen and the development officials from Quilon district also foresee the potential for oyster farming in Ashtamudi Lake. Based on the views formed in the group discussion the Institute may establish demonstration farms in the potential areas involving the target group so that they can believe by seeing and learn by doing. An interdisciplinary and inter-institutional approach may be followed in taking the technology to the clientele.

The authors are grateful to Dr. P. S. B. R. James, Director, Dr. K. A. Narasimham, Principal Scientist and Head, Molluscan Fisheries Division and Shri D. B. S. Sehara, Head, SEETT Division for the help in carrying out the evaluation and preparation of the report.