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## SUCCESSFUL LONG DISTANCE ROAD TRANSPORT OF GREEN MUSSEL FROM CALICUT TO PORT OKHA\*

The seeds of green mussel were collected from coastal areas at Elathur (north of Calicut) in the morning hours of 26-11-'83, and after cleaning them thoroughly with sea water, without any prior conditioning, were kept in HDPE tanks of about 300-400 litre capacity. A total of 9,000 seeds were thus collected and transported to Port Okha.

A few seeds were transported in polythene bags with sea water kept in empty kerosene tins in the same manner as inland fish seeds are transported, with periodic oxygenation.

Oxygen was given for 5-7 minutes once in every 3-4 hrs of day time journey in HDPE tanks and once in every 24 hrs for the seeds packed in polythene bags. No journey was performed between 2000 hrs to 0600 hrs. At night, the faecal material was removed from all the containers by sieve, so that the debris was at a minimal level in the water. During the whole night period, the polythene bags were kept open and just before the commencement of the day time journey oxygen was supplied. An inverted funnel type of cover was specially fabricated to cover the HDPE tanks to minimise the spillage of water during the transport.

It was found that during transportation the mussels used to remain attached in groups to the tanks or one another by the byssus threads.

In HDPE containers the density of mussel was 3-4/l and in polythene bags kept in kerosene tins it was 25/l. The latter type of packing seemed to be good as far as general condition and economics of transport were concerned. The journey started from Calicut on 26-11-'83 at 1000 hrs and ended at Port Okha on 1-12-'83 at 0230 hrs covering a linear distance of 2,300 km. The average size was 24.4 mm in length, 4.6 g in wet weight, 12.8 mm in width and 7.7 mm in breadth, and the transport used was a closed body insulated 10 tonner truck. Water was not changed during the entire journey period from Calicut to Okha.

On arrival at the destination, the mussel seeds were immediately kept in a collapsible 12 footer tank filled with seawater and allowed to rest for two days, after which a dozen or two of them were allowed to attach on separate coral stones. Very few of them tried to avoid the stones, though on second attempt they readily attached to them. The stones were then transported in a vessel and implanted in Gulf of Kutch Islands.

The experience gained in the process of transportation can go a long way in mass transplantation of mussel seeds or allied fish/shellfish seeds in the future.

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