

DR M. DEVARAJ TAKES OVER AS DIRECTOR OF CMFRI

Dr M. Devaraj, Joint Director, CIFE has taken over as the Director of CMFRI on 8 March 1995. Dr Devaraj has 30 years of service in fisheries R&D in various institutions including the Tamil Nadu State Fisheries Department, the CMFRI, Fisheries College & Research Institute of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and the CIFE. His areas of specialization include fisheries biology and fish stock assessment. He has been instrumental in initiating a large number of research projects in mariculture in the Fisheries College, Tuticorin and the CIFE, Bombay. He had his formal education in the Presidency College, Madras, the London School of Economics and the Madurai Kamaraj University. He visited the U.K, Senegal, Pakistan, Singapore and the Sultanate of Oman in connection with various academic and scientific programmes in fisheries. His Manual of Fish Population Dynamics has been acclaimed to be one of the authentic documents in tropical fish stock assessment.

Addressing the scientists of the Institute at the SRC meeting which took place soon after his taking over, Dr Devaraj stressed the need for reorienting the research projects which were the real instruments through which the Institute achieved its goals and objectives. For this the assessment of the status of the stocks and fisheries within each major ecological province in their respective areas is required. In the context of multispecies/multigear fisheries, the bioeconomically optimum effort and mesh sizes should receive more attention. The problems of economic management has become the characteristic of our marine capture fisheries, said Dr Devaraj. The active involvement and participation of the community and the industry is crucial to sustaining production at optimum levels. In the field of fishery forecasting, with the Institute's own database in



conjunction with the meteorological data from the IMD and the PFZ maps from the NRSA it should be possible to identify the distinct ecological provinces and basic geographical units for prediction and instant dissemination of the information. According to Dr Devaraj, CMFRI has an excellent record of mariculture technology development. His priority would be to integrate small scale mariculture with small scale capture fisheries and to motivate the fisherfolk to adopt technologies as an integral part of their profession. The NGOs located in the major coastal areas are better placed to facilitate the activity. The externally funded as well as consultancy projects need to be strengthened to develop, upgrade and transfer the technologies and generate funds for the improvement of laboratories and growout facilities particularly for nutrition, disease, physiology, endocrinology and genetics research. The Institute should also organise monthly meets with the fishing and fish farming communities and the industry to render the required advisory services. Dr Devaraj called upon the scientists to carry forward CMFRI's rich heritage of knowledge by nurturing and advancing it.