

Clam Processing Facility at Perumbalam village, Alappuzha district, Kerala: An ICAR-CIFT initiative with people's participation

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The clam fishing activity in Perumbalam village, an island in the Vembanad estuarine system in Alappuzha District, is completely family-based. About 200 families are engaged in clam collection, processing and marketing for their livelihood, with fishermen looking after harvesting, processing and marketing being taken care of by the fisherwomen. The households involved in clam picking are spread across eight wards along the coast. The ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Cochin intervened in this venture with the intention of transforming this family-centric activity into a centralized clam production, processing and marketing activity with people's participation. CIFT conducted a diagnostic study to explore the feasibility of establishing a clam cluster in the village and for

channelizing the clam harvesting, processing and marketing activities through a consultancy agreement with Haritha Farmer's Club, Perumbalam during 2011. Through a DST-SEED funded project, this was implemented with the participation of local partners, the Perumbalam Grama Panchayat and Haritha Farmer's Club, and by mobilizing the clam fishers and processors of the village. Eight of the thirteen wards of the island were surveyed with the collaboration of local project partners and the possibility of forming 14 clusters, each having about 10-15 members in this region were identified and five clusters formed. Standardized protocols for processing clam meat was developed, value added products were developed and demonstrated; customized machinery required



Formal inauguration of the clam processing facility

for the processing facility were designed and fabricated; capacities of the local people were built; and a fully operational clam processing facility was established. The facility includes depuration tanks system for depurating clams; processing hall equipped with tables, flake ice machine, chill room; a cooking-cum-boiler unit for cooking and shucking the clams; and a meat-shell separator for mechanically separating the meat from the shell. The cleaned, packed

clam product is expected to be safe and can fetch a premium price in the market. Product diversification that was demonstrated can be an added income generating activity which can be taken up by the cluster members. The anticipated increase in sale price of clam meat after processing is about 119% which will directly go to the families involved in clam harvesting and processing clam meat.



Value added clam products