

CAGE FARMING HEADED FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT IN KERALA, INDIA

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Women's contribution to aquaculture in India is often under-estimated and the benefits from their involvement in aquaculture activity are also not factually considered. The present study is focused on the participation of women in cage aquaculture in Ernakulam District of Kerala, India. The observations reveal that their role is significant and forms a major component in social development as well as family wellbeing. A case study at Pizhala, a fishing village near Ernakulam showed that women have more knowledge in terms of the management of cage farms like, seed procurement, nursery rearing, feed scheduling, feeding, cage maintenance, marketing etc. Women have been found to be directly involved in fabrication of cage and its maintenance, procuring good quality fish seed and its stocking. They are also found to be selling fish on their own and assure more profit in terms of money as well as quality of the product is well preserved with proper handling. Women sell the produce directly at farm-gate and in local markets to assure elimination of middlemen. The most significant and positive aspect of involvement of women in cage farming is that since their family income has increased and it is being used for food, health care and education of the family members. Women's participation can ensure social and economic empowerment in the rural societies in India like the one at Pizhala, Ernakulam.



Even though the village in the present study is very close to the city, development is meager due to the poor financial status of the people out there. However, with involvement of women also in cage farming activities, the village has opened up a better avenue for the development of

aquaculture as well as social upliftment and equal opportunity. If women are supported more with schemes in aquaculture, a developed rural society can be assured in many areas in the country. Equal opportunity would ensure substantial societal development



starting from family health, education and standard of living. It is also observed that, once involved in cage farming, women are ready to expand it further with own efforts and expenditure, which shows the positive and healthy attitude among the women farmers.

