

Effective utilisation of clam resources: A way forward to women empowerment in the Perumbalam village, Alappuza district, Kerala

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INTRODUCTION

The black clam fishery sustains the livelihood of coastal fishing communities of the Perumbalam island. The livelihood of around 250 families depend on the clam fishery. Unlike the fin fish fishery, women and men have equal roles in black clam fishery. The clam is harvested by the men and processed and marketed by women, who attend to their household chores and also find time for marketing activities of the clam. Despite the hard work they gain very less.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the role of women in clam fishery in Perumbalam village
- To investigate the scope of strengthening capacities of the clam fisher women of the island
- To transfer technology in specific areas as a tool to reduce drudgery and generate

METHODOLOGY

- Participatory mode of data collection was adopted. Sixty clam fisherwomen were interviewed to collect data on the issues limiting their socioeconomic development
- To facilitate knowledge dissemination the clam fisherwomen were grouped into clusters with the help of local project collaborators



RESULTS

- **Current methods of clam processing followed and the problem involved**
 - Harvested clams are boiled in aluminium containers
 - Meat is separated using iron meshed sieves.
 - The meat is retained in the aluminium containers till it is marketed
 - They spend 8 hrs time to clam processing activities.
 - Exposure to smoke while boiling clam causing respiratory problems
 - Very less knowledge in the manufacturing practices in the processing and value addition

● Technological Interventions

- The quality of the clam meat can be enhanced by depuration in filtered water.
- The use of boiling unit can reduce the effort of burning fossil fuels and also reduce the risk of respiratory diseases.
- Shucking of the clam meat by using mechanical meat shell separators can reduce the effort.
- The chill room facility and proper packaging helps the fishers to store clam meat for long time and they can also meet the wide range of market demand.
- Value addition of the clam meat through product diversification gives them an opportunity to earn more income with the limited resources.
- Using head gears and gloves also during the processing of clam meat also reduces the bacterial load and make the product safe.

● Capacity building

- Training was imparted to the selected members of the cluster on the improved method of processing of clam and on the preparation of value added products



Conclusion

- The adoption of technological interventions in the processing of clams and value addition helped the clam fisherwomen to reduce drudgery and modernisation of their processing and preservation techniques, thereby improving net earnings, investment and standard of living

