FUSION OF FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE AND PRODUCT VALUE ADDITION SKILL FOR MAINSTREAMING WOMEN IN LIVELIHOOD GENERATION

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Women participate actively in many fisheries activities, but their contribution to fisheries is largely unrecognized. More than 80% of women work force in India is engaged in seafood processing plants. Rural women in India are mostly engaged in retail fish marketing as a small scale enterprise. Women in the post-harvest fisheries sector in India are more visible in fresh fish trade.

There is scope for value addition at different nodes in the processing and marketing chain. Establishment of family or community based enterprises could be an attractive proposition to tap the potential of value addition and be a source of sustainable income. Considering the above facts, Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA) had undertaken a women mainstreaming project. Women Self Help groups were trained in value addition activities of different freshwater aquaculture products like Indian major carps, Pangas, murrel, tilapia, prawn, etc. Various products like whole boneless carp, boneless fish, fillets, fingers and nuggets, drumstick and ready-to-cook products from murrel and anabas. Training and skill development programmes for women SHG stakeholders were undertaken on a pilot scale. Fish pickle production was found to be a lucrative business. Preparation of fish gel and its incorporation to develop fish wafers, fish *papad* and fish noodle has also been found to be economically and commercially feasible. The benefit to cost ratio for primary processed, ready-to-cook fish products varied from 1.1 to 1.3. For ready-to-eat products like fish cutlet, fish ball, fish nuggets, fish burgers, the benefit to cost ratio was still higher ranging from 1.4 to 1.8. .