LOCATION SPECIFIC INTERVENTION FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF COASTAL WOMEN: AN EXPERIENCE IN KERALA

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Community participation plays a key role in common property resource management for sustainable development that has significant impacts on the quality of the environment. Small-scale aquaculture has the potential to contribute significantly to poverty reduction and improve food and livelihood security in coastal area. Shellfish aquaculture appears to represent a unique opportunity to increase female participation in the fisheries sector. Improved growing and water management techniques and the introduction of value addition options presents an opportunity for women SHG groups to generate additional earnings for supporting their livelihoods. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) project on Location specific livelihood interventions in fisheries sector for the empowerment of fisherwomen in coastal Kerala carried out by CIFT, introduced livelihood options of culture of edible oyster and value addition for women groups in coastal fishing villages in Kerala. The project intervention during the year 2010-11 was evaluated to work out the economics of edible oyster culture and value added products. It was found that a profit of 137$, 64$, 52$ could be generated out of an area of rack and ren culture of oysters of 50 m2, 30 m2,25 m2 respectively. The estimates showed that there was potential of generating 23,054$ per hectare which presents ample opportunity for the women groups to expand the area of culture. Value addition options were found to be another lucrative option capable of generating profits of 0.7$per kilogram from making fish cutlets, 1.8$ from fish pickle and 1.9$ from prawn pickle. The study gives an insight how need based location specific technology intervention will overcome social biological and economic constraints of coastal fisherwomen.