

# ANDAMAN SHEEKHA

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## ICAR-CIARI Signs MoU with Island Fisheries and Marine Services SHG to Promote Cage Culture in North Bay

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Sri Vijaya Puram, Sept 01: The ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-CIARI), Sri Vijayapuram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Island Fisheries and Marine Services Self Help Group (SHG) on 31 August 2026 for the demonstration, promotion and technical support of marine fish cage culture at North Bay, South Andaman. The MoU aims to facilitate the field-level adoption of scientific mariculture practices and demonstrate the potential of cage-based farming as a viable and sustainable livelihood option for local fishers and SHG members.

Dr. Jai Sundar, Director, ICAR-CIARI, discussed the areas of collaboration envisaged under the MoU and encouraged the SHG to consider progressing towards a cooperative society to enhance the scale of operations, access to services and benefits, and long-term sustainability of the initiative.

Dr. M. Muruganandam, Head, Fisheries Science Division, ICAR-CIARI, highlighted that the collaboration would facilitate the convergence of scientific and technical expertise with the experience and entrepreneurship of field-level stakeholders. He informed that this collaboration is an initiative to provide a practical model for demonstration of successful cage-based marine fish farming as an alternative and supplementary livelihood opportunity in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands,

Dr. Kirubasankar, Senior Scientist, briefed the participants on suitable potential zones for cage farming and the important precautions and site-specific considerations required for safe and efficient cage culture.

Dr. Praveenraj, Senior Scientist, Mr. Chittaranjan Raul and Dr. Jess Maria Wilson, Scientists, highlighted ICAR-CIARI's ongoing initiatives in fish health surveillance, disease monitoring and the development of marine fish farming through cage-based systems. These technical services will be extended to the SHG as part of the collaboration.

The team of the ICAR-CIARI stated that it would provide technical guidance and demonstrate Asian seabass (*Lates calcarifer*) culture in HDPE circular sea cages, fabricated and made available under the All India Network Project (AINP) on Mariculture, ICAR through the Fisheries Science Division.

The collaboration is expected to strengthen technology transfer, capacity building, entrepreneurship and field-level adoption of improved technologies promoting scientific, sustainable and economically viable mariculture practices among local fishers and SHG members in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It will also provide a platform for generating field-based data and knowledge on the performance, economics and sustainability of marine fish cage culture under island conditions.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Jai Sundar on behalf of ICAR-CIARI and Mr. Mahadev Mallick, Secretary and Mr. Parsuram Mohanty, Member on behalf of the Island Fisheries and Marine Services SHG. Mr. D. Karunakaran, Senior Scientist, facilitated the signing and exchange of documents. The programme was coordinated by Mr. Chittaranjan Raul and Dr. Jess Maria Wilson.

As part of the collaboration, the Fisheries Science Division of ICAR-CIARI will extend technical support and guidance covering the major components of cage-based marine fish farming, including:

- Cage installation, mooring and operational management
- Water quality monitoring and management
- Fish health and disease surveillance
- Seed quality and certification
- Stocking density and stocking practices
- Feeding and feed management
- Growth and survival monitoring
- Biosecurity and disease prevention
- Scientific management of cage culture systems
- Technical interventions to improve fish survival, growth and production

During the interaction, the team also discussed the possibility of local production of floating fish feed to improve the availability of quality feed, reduce transportation-related costs and lower the overall cost of marine fish farming in the Islands. Strengthening fish disease surveillance, health-care interventions and preventive fish health management was also discussed as an important area for improving production efficiency and farm-level profitability.

The Island Fisheries and Marine Services SHG, comprising 10 active members, has already installed four GI cages for undertaking cage-based fish culture and has demonstrated strong commitment towards developing cage farming as a sustainable livelihood activity. The partnership with ICAR-CIARI is expected to strengthen their technical capacity and facilitate the transition towards more scientific and productive cage farming practices.