

## ICAR-CMFRI helps Athidhi Achuth to become India's first transgender entrepreneur in fisheries under SCSP scheme

The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CMFRI), Kochi has extended support to Athidhi Achuth, a trans person belonging to the Scheduled Caste community from Kerala, to turn entrepreneur in fisheries.



In a bid to support the transwoman for earning regular income for a living, the Institute provided Athidhi Achuth a modernised fish vending stall in Kochi city at a cost of around Rs. 5 lakhs under the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) scheme of the Government of India. With the official launch of the fish vending stall on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the 36-year-old Athidhi in turn became the country's first transgender entrepreneur in the fisheries sector. ICAR-CMFRI also provided fresh and live fishes for the first sale. Apart from marine captured fishes, live fishes farmed in cage fish farms and biofloc units of SC & ST beneficiaries also made available in the **"ATHIDHI'S LIVE & FRESH FISH MART"** at Vennala Market in the city, which was inaugurated by the cine artists Shri. Harisree Ashokan and Smt. Molly Kannamally.



By fulfilling the long cherished dream of Athidhi Achuth, ICAR-CMFRI aims at bringing trans persons to the entrepreneurship in the fisheries sector and also helping the cage fish farmers and biofloc fish farmers in the SC community to sell their yield without the influence of middlemen with a broad perspective of supplying safe and quality fresh and live fish to the general public at nominal price.

The SCSP scheme is being successfully carried out by ICAR-CMFRI by making use of the technologies of cage fish farming, pond fish farming, seaweed farming, crab fattening, lobster fattening, pen culture, marine ornamental fish culture, biofloc fish farming, mussel and oyster farming through its various centres in all the coastal states of India. The implementation of the project has turned out to a huge success as it helped the SC and ST populations of the country to find a better livelihood option.

ICAR-CMFRI reached out to Athidhi Achuth as she was undergoing unpleasant situation to secure a job due to her transgender identity and struggling hard for a living. The initiative assumes also significance in the wake of the difficulty being faced by cage fish farmers and biofloc fish farmers in the SC community to market their produce. With the establishment of the modernised fish stall, ICAR-CMFRI aims to address this lacuna and create a market avenue for cage fish farmers and biofloc fish farmers to sell their live fish through the stall.

The fish stall developed by CMFRI is equipped with deep freezer, fish display table with cooler, billing machine, weighing balance and other facilities for cutting, and cleaning the fish along with the facility for maintaining the fish in live and fresh conditions. Apart from direct sale, home delivery of the cleaned and sealed packets of fishes will be available for the pre-booked customers.

According to Dr A Gopalakrishnan, Director of ICAR-CMFRI, the Institute focused on transgender members in the SC community in the second phase of implementing the SCSP scheme. This is part of CMFRI's aim to gender mainstreaming of the transgender members, who are the most marginalized community in the society, by generating livelihood opportunities in the fisheries sector. This initiative is also a part of the mission to create opportunities in the fisheries sector for the most neglected transgender community. The CMFRI will extend the service of the scheme to more transgender members in the SC community. The institute also aims to empower the transgender members by attracting them to cage fish farming and biofloc fish culture in the future by giving them proper scientific and technical guidance.

Dr. K Madhu, Chairman of the SCSP&TSP scheme and Principal Scientist, Mariculture Division of CMFRI handed over the key of the stall to Athidhi. ICAR-CMFRI have been providing training to the people belonging to SC and ST communities across the country to make them small-scale entrepreneurs in cage fish farming and various other fish farming activities.



