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Published: November 6, 2013 00:00 IST | Updated: November 6, 2013 05:43 IST

Fishermen exploring new avenues

P. Samuel Jonathan

CIFT holds training programme in new techniques in fish processing



Women making various fish delicacies at a programme organised by Central Institute of Fisheries Technology at Kothapalem on Tuesday.—
Photo: T. Vijaya Kumar

Families at this tiny village at the mouth of Bay of Bengal depend on the sea for their livelihood. Each day, men and women venture into sea hoping for a catch. However, taking advantage of regulations middlemen are making a fortune while fishermen hardly get enough money to feed their family members. Now, thanks to the support extended by the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology based at Visakhapatnam, fishing community is exploring new avenues. An Entrepreneurship Development Programme organised by CIFT in association with Repalle based Medical and Cultural Association is holding programmes to train the families in new techniques in drying, processing, value addition and marketing the fish produce.

The sessions turned to be an eye opener for the fishing community as they learnt the importance of hygiene in preserving the fish, refrigeration and value addition to the produce.

“We are training the women in making fish pickles, fish wafers, fish cutlets and other delicacies. The value added fish products will have a long shelf life and can be marketed as well,” B.K Panda, senior technical officer from CIFT, told *The Hindu* during a programme held on Tuesday. Collector S. Suresh Kumar, who addressed the fishermen, later witnessed a demonstration of how the fish wafers were made by cutting dried fish into thin slices. The wafers are then vacuum-packed neatly and sold to departmental stores.

“We will encourage those who want to set up units in fish processing. I will extend all help to the fishing community through the Fisheries Development Corporation and other agencies,” said Mr. Suresh Kumar. Secretary of MCA, V. Prakash Rao said this was the third training programme held for fishermen to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to them.

Mr. Panda further said good quality of salt, free from Halophilic bacteria and other micro organisms, keeps the fish free from infections. While drying, the fishermen should hang the fish between poles rather than spreading them on floors, which makes them prone to dust and bacterial infections.

Printable version | Nov 6, 2013 4:25:56 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/fishermen-exploring-new-avenues/article5319711.ece>

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