

Enhancing Rural Livelihood through Ornamental Fish Culture

The demand for ornamental fish is increasing in the national and international markets due to aesthetic pleasure and the belief that it brings luck, helps ease stress and other factors. The number of people involved in ornamental fish rearing is increasing day by the day in the region. For many it is hobby, while others have taken up ornamental fish culture for aesthetic factors and financial gains. The earning potential of this sector has hardly been understood and the same is not being exploited in a technology driven manner. Considering the relatively simple techniques involved, this activity has the potential to create substantial employment opportunities in rural areas, besides generating additional income with minimal risk and consuming less time.



Ornamental fish culture is an innovative technology to the farm women consuming very less time and less investment with high profits, besides increasing the water productivity. Before the inception of the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) in the Chitradurga district of Karnataka, the farmers were not aware of ornamental fish culture. As part of IGA ornamental fish culture was introduced with initial investment support from the project by constructing the cement tank/cistern and by introducing the suitable varieties of ornamental fishes (Molly, Guppy, and sword tail). Farm women were trained and exposure visits were arranged to the establish fishery units around Bangalore, besides showing assured market. Formation of ornamental fish grower association further led to forward and backward linkages which secured good prices for Ornamental fish NAIP supported seventy such units.



Fish were being sold directly at an average rate of Rs 8 per fish to the aquarium shops or to the Karnataka Fisheries Development Corporation. In the melas, the farm women/ SHG are also selling to the customers @ Rs.150 for a pair of fishes in 6 or 8" bowls along with a packet of feed (25g) and a twig of ornamental aquatic plant. The gross return per annum of Rs. 24,634 was obtained by incurring the total cost of Rs. 14, 398 for two cement tanks of 500 liters each besides other expenditure towards labour, fingerlings, feed, water etc. The net benefit was of Rs. 10, 235 per annum to the farm women with little time, labour and investment with minimal risk.

(Source: College of Agriculture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore-560 065)