

# Ornamental Fish Aquaculture

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**Context-** Through coordinated efforts, it is anticipated that community-based ornamental fish aquaculture will assist Lakshadweep island women in taking the first step toward self-sufficiency.

## Key Highlights

- The first-of-its-kind community-based ornamental fish aquaculture experiment made use of local resources. Up to 82 islanders, including 77 women, were chosen and received extensive training.
- With the help of technical assistance from the ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR), they have established groups for the aquaculture of ornamental fish.
- **Role of National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR):**
  - On Agatti Island, the NBFGR operates a germplasm resource center for marine ornamental organisms in the interest of conservation and expanding islander livelihood options.
  - The NBFGR is providing assistance by building local women's capacity and supporting community aquaculture units that raise captive-bred marine ornamentals, such as shrimps, to marketable size.
  - Until the organisms reach a size that can be sold, the Agatti island NBFGR project team will keep an eye on the units and provide technical assistance.
- **Expansion:**
  - In addition to the two ornamental shrimp species, captive-raised clownfish seeds were also provided to the groups for further rearing in order to expand the activity and increase women's income.

## Significance

- **Keeping economic life going and giving women more power:**
  - Given that the islands only have a limited supply of coconut and tuna fish, it is crucial to assist the islanders, particularly the women, in earning a living.
  - During the monsoon season, fishing practically stops, preventing a vital economic activity.
  - However, ornamental fish aquaculture is anticipated to maintain the islands' economic rhythm.
- **friendly to the environment:**
  - Using coconut fronds and leaves and solar panels, the community-based breeding and sale of ornamental fish experiment has been made environmentally friendly.

## Ornamental fish farming in India

- The cultivation of attractive, colorful, and diversely characterized fishes in a restricted aquatic system is known as ornamental fish culture.
- Due to its color, shape, and appearance, exotic species are in high demand.
- **Economic contribution:**
  - India's ornamental fishes account for about 1% of the global ornamental fish trade.
    - In 2020 and beyond, 54 tons of these fish will be exported, with a value of 13.08 crore rupees.
    - Quantity increased by 66.55 percent, and value increased by 20.59 percent in INR.
- **Potential for growth:**
  - The following factors indicate that ornamental fish production in India has great potential:
    - The presence of species with a lot of biodiversity,
    - favorable climate, and
    - cheap labor.
  - In India, ornamental fish farming is mostly practiced in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.
  - To meet demand for export, about 90% of native species, including 85% from northeast India, are collected and raised.

### Lakshadweep

- In Malayalam and Sanskrit, the name Lakshadweep means "a hundred thousand islands." The Union Territory was established in 1956, and in 1973, it was given the name Lakshadweep.
- Lakshadweep, India's smallest Union Territory, is an archipelago of 36 islands that covers 32 square kilometers.
- The Kerala coastal city of Kochi is 220 to 440 kilometers away from each of the islands in the emerald Arabian Sea.
- It is a Union Territory with only one district and consists of ten inhabited islands, three reefs, five submerged banks, and 12 atolls.
- Kavaratti is UT's principal town in addition to serving as the state's capital.
- **Natural characteristics**
  - The exotic, sun-kissed beaches and lush vegetation of Lakshadweep are well-known.
  - Lakshadweep's natural landscapes, sandy beaches, abundant flora and fauna, and lack of a rushed lifestyle add to its mystique.
- **Service providers:**
  - To the Lakshadweep Islands, only BSNL and Airtel offer telecommunications services.
  - Airtel connects to the islands of Kavaratti and Agatti, whereas BSNL connects to all ten inhabited islands.
- **Permit for entry:**
  - It is difficult to enter the islands of Lakshadweep. To visit these islands, one must have a Lakshadweep Administration entry permit.