

Date:05/03/2011 URL:**<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/03/05/stories/2011030557260500.htm>**

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Eventful session for Nizampatnam fisher folk

Staff Reporter

MCA ties up with CIFT to conduct awareness programme

NIZAMPATNAM (GUNTUR DT): Everyone enjoys having a bowl of potato wafers, but how about fried fish wafers. Well, the fish wafers are not only as tasty and crunchy as the potato wafers but they are also rich in protein, so vital for human beings.

The fishermen and women at the sea port in Nizampatnam had a taste of the crisp fish wafers at an awareness meeting organised by the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), thanks to an initiative by Repalle-based Medical and Cultural Association (MCA).

Secretary of MCA, Repalle based physician V. Prakash Rao said the programme was held to sensitise fishing communities about good practices in drying fish and to increase their livelihood options.

Its not just pickles, but a whole variety of value added products like, fish pickle, fish noodles, fish kure (no different than kurekure), dried Mackerel fish and fish oil capsules were on display at the meeting

The wafers are made by cutting dried fish into thin slices and are vacuum-packed neatly.

They are available at select departmental stores. Some fishing communities in Visakhapatnam have already reaped a bounty by successfully marketing the value added fish products.

And for the fishing communities in Nizampatnam, the session turned out to be an eye-opener as a team from CIFT led by Principal Scientist M.M Prasad explained about the effectiveness of post harvest methods and the importance of hygiene in drying fish.

Dr. Prasad said fishing communities could increase their earnings by following scientific methods in cleaning and drying fish.

He said good quality of salt free from Halofilic 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. One has to use chlorinated water to clean the fish.

The CIFT can also facilitate providing solar driers with financial assistance from National Fisheries Development Board.

While packing, the fishermen could use air tight sugar bags and other polythene bags rather than using conventional gunny sacs.

He also stressed the importance of maintaining quality as products like fish pickles have great demand and could fetch Rs.280 per bottle.

Even the waste products could be converted into useful products like, Chitasan and Chitran which have great medicinal and export value, he added.

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