Inland fisheries sector lost ₹93.7 cr in floods, says CIFT

DC CORRESPONDENT
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The inland fisheries sector in the state has incurred a loss of ₹93.7 crore in the recent floods, as per a Central Institute of Fisheries Technology assessment. The loss is severe due to loss of fishes from reservoirs, habitat loss and damage to the ecosystem. It would take some time to recuperate, says the CIFT assessment report. Of the ₹93.7 crore loss, Alappuzha accounted for 54 per cent, followed by Kottayam (18.8 per cent) and Ernakulam (12.3 per cent). The damage caused to the craft and gear in marine and inland fisheries sector is estimated to be roughly ₹11 crore.

As per the direction of Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Union ministry of agriculture, CIFT director Dr C.N. Ravishankar constituted eight teams headed by Dr Leela Edwin to assess the flood impact.

The teams visited flood affected areas and had discussion with the state fisheries department, and fishermen.

The damage was assessed on three parameters - loss to the crafts and gears including nets, livelihood and ecology.

Many of the fishing crafts, gear and accessories were either washed away or damaged.

Total loss due to damage or loss of craft and gear is about ₹6.7 crores in inland fisheries sector and ₹48 lakh in marine sector.

The loss of livelihood is due to reduction in fish catch, loss of opportunities for associated activities, loss of labour days and wages, and secondary impacts.

The environmental damages include siltation of the water bodies, accumulation of debris, change in course of rivers and decline in water level.

Change in fishing environment due to damage of the terrain, uprooted trees, garbage, and sunken gears obstructing water flow, change in fish species in the catch, presence of exotic fish species and loss of biodiversity and invasion of exotic and carnivorous fishes are the other major challenges posed by the deluge. Decaying of organic matter brought in floods has started causing death of juvenile fishes.

The report has recommends series of measures to restore the livelihood of fishermen.