Fisheries livelihood losses up to ₹94 crore, says CIFT estimate

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The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi, which has made a rapid assessment of the damage to craft and gear and livelihood of capture fisheries in Kerala in the recent floods, estimates that the loss of livelihood was about ₹94 crore while damage to the craft and gear in marine and inland capture fisheries cost about ₹11 crore.

Loss of fish from the reservoirs, habitat destruction and damage to the ecosystem congenial for growth of fish population are pronounced and it would take some time to revive, said CIFT in a statement here on Wednesday. CIFT made the assessment on a direction from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. C. N. Ravishankar, director, CIFT constituted eight teams headed by Leela Edwin. The teams visited all flood-affected areas of the State and collected information and held discussion with the stakeholders. Discussions were also held with the State fisheries department, and fishermen in the affected sites.

The study noted that the craft used in the estuarine and inland sector were mostly made of wood (sometimes with an FRP coating) or entirely made of FRP. The length of the vessels varied and often ranged from four to seven metres and cost between ₹10,000 and ₹60,000. Use of tubes, dugout canoes and coracles are rampant in the reservoirs. Gillnets are the most commonly used among the different gears and it constitutes more than 60 per cent of the total gears in the State. Other gears used include cast nets, small seines, hook and lines, traps in the inland sector and stake nets and Chinese dipnets are found in the estuarine stretches. Many of the fishing gear and accessories were washed away along with fishing craft.

The total loss due to damage to craft and gear is about ₹6.7 crore in the inland system and ₹48 lakh in the marine system. In the inland system, high damage was reported in Idukki, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Kottayam and Thrissur districts. In the marine fisheries, most damage was in Malappuram (₹3.93 crore) and Kollam (₹0.27 crore).