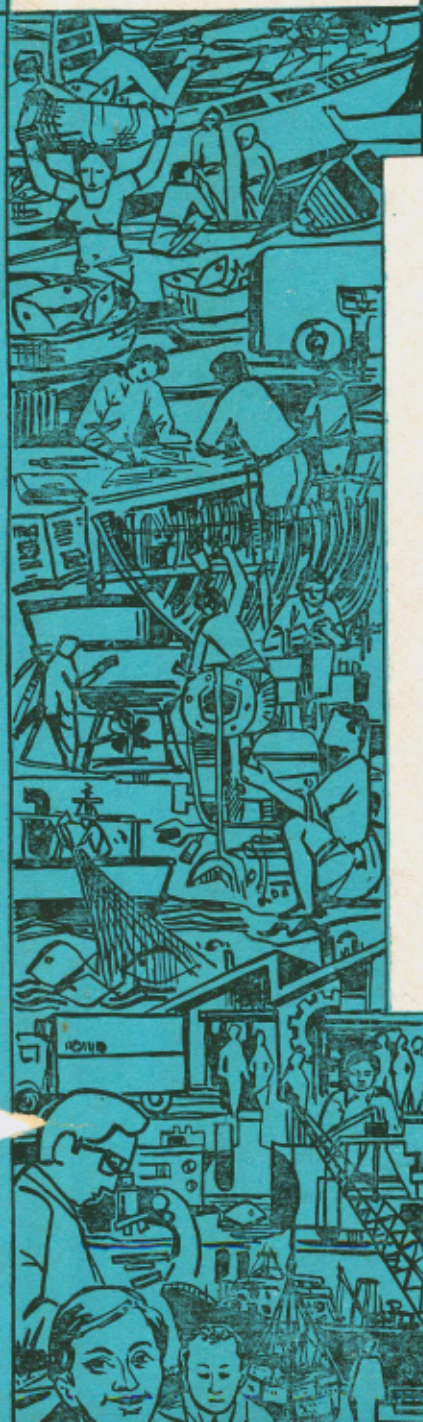




Fish Technology newsletter

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Modern Lobster traps designed and developed by CIFT and operated along the Kanyakumari coast. (Report on page 4)

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF FISHERIES TECHNOLOGY

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Fish Processing Technology Generates Rural Development*



Women and children of Kumbalam collecting clams.

Kumbalam is a silent, sleepy little village on the bank of Ashtamudi lake near Kundara in Quilon District of Kerala. Many fishermen in Kumbalam earn their livelihood by collecting clams from the nearby lake. The women and children go early in the morning with their baskets, dive into the lake and collect clams for hours together. The adult men take their boats into deeper portions of the lake, dive into the lake carrying a scooping type of net with a metallic frame at the mouth and scoop out the clams from the bottom

of the lake. They work daily during the clam fishing season for hours at a stretch.

Earlier, the clams used to be dumped in heaps on the shore and the meat allowed to rot away after which the shells would be sold to the lime and cement industry. The shells are rich in calcium carbonate and make a good source of cement.

A small part of the clam meat used to be boiled and sold in open baskets by the fisherwomen to the local populace with small returns.

In July 1979, the scientists from Central Institute of Fisheries Technology stepped into this village and demonstrated



A small percentage of the boiled clam meat being sold in the traditional way.

the detailed technique of pickling of clam meat and home canning of clam meat. The

local fishermen and entrepreneurs showed keen interest in this technique and hoped that the meat, a majority of which had been wasting, could be converted into rich food fetching far greater returns as well as employment. They continued their contacts with the scientists of this Institute, particularly Shri K. K. Balachandran, Shri M. K. Kandorran, Shri P. Vasudeva Prabhu, Dr. K. Gopakumar and others and the result was that a few of the local enterprising people decided to give the idea a practical shape.

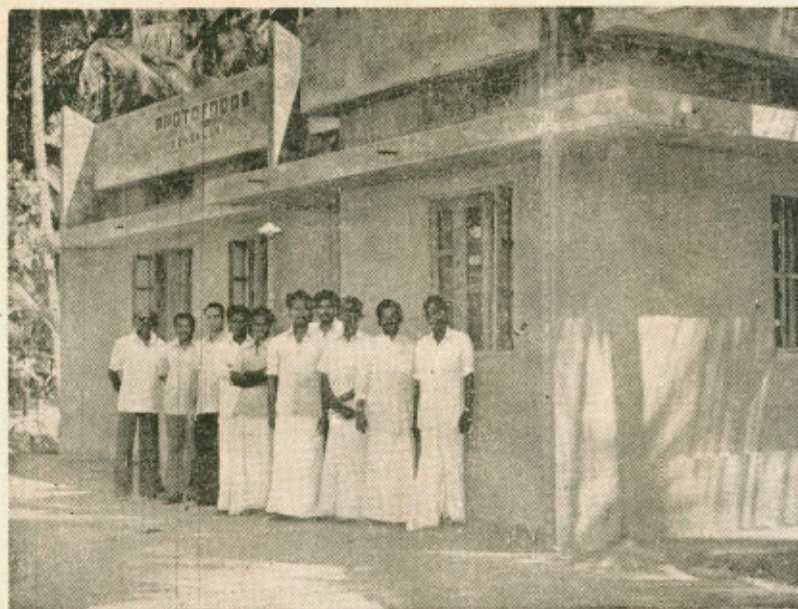


Scientists of CIFT imparting training to the fishermen and fisherwomen of Kumbalam in clam processing.

After a few months they started a small industry in a humble way and christened it M/s. Protofoods. Protofoods started manufacturing clam

meat pickle on the scientific lines advocated by CIFT scientists. In the beginning they met with certain difficulties of taste, shelf-life etc. but these were gradually overcome with the joint efforts of the CIFT scientists as well as the eager entrepreneurs. There were also some minor problems like availability of bottles in time for packing the product etc. but these were also overcome during the course of time.

M/s. Protofoods established marketing agents in different places and to begin with, the product was sold in limited quantities. Consumers' reaction was very encouraging from the very beginning and the producers also tried to adjust to the consumers' demand by trial and error



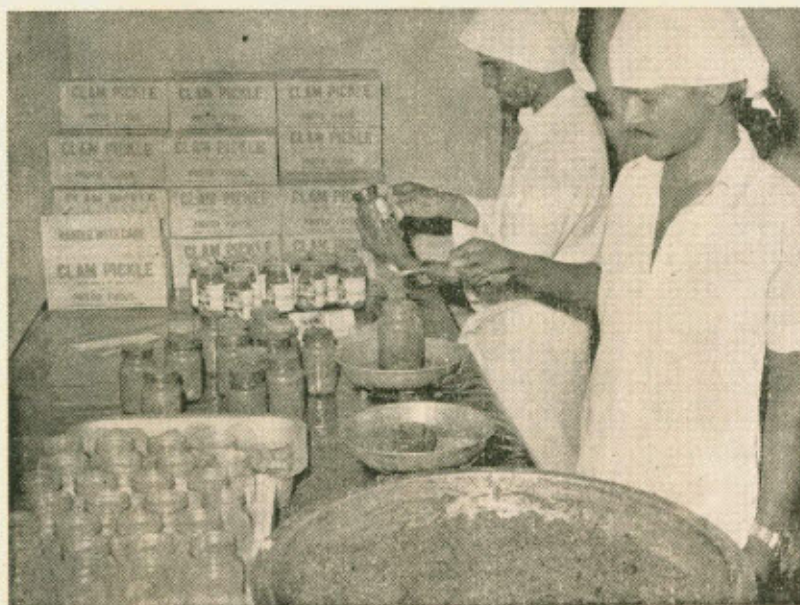
M/s Protofoods

with the help of expertise available at CIFT.

The result of this interesting and desirable marriage of ideas between technology,

fishermen, entrepreneurs and consumer was that 40 people from the local Kumbalam village were employed in M/s. Protofoods and are earning their livelihood from it. The firm has now started entering the export market and let us all wish them the best in the time to come.

The producers are also very happy that the effort put in by them in processing clam meat is now fetching returns not only in terms of shell, but also in terms of meat and their long hours inside the water without modern scientific equipment, now fetch them a happier life and a better standard of living. The problems have not ended though; in fact some

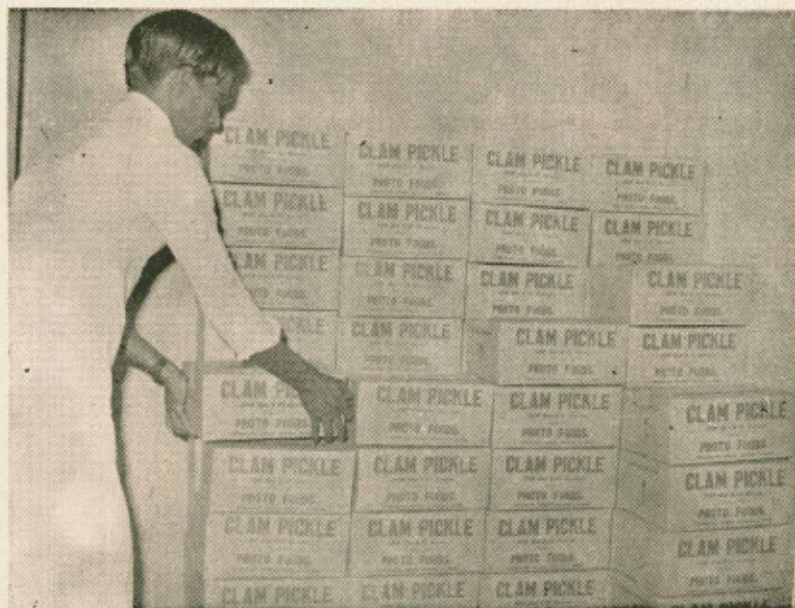


Clam meat pickle being prepared in Kumbalam on commercial scale.

★Written by Dr. P. N. Kaul, Sri M. K. Kandoran and Sri S. Balasubramaniam

of them have only begun. Some of these include the rising cost of the raw-material, the heavier exploitation of the resources etc. The CIFT is seized of these problems and is trying to not only solve them as and when they arise but also trying to foresee that problems may be likely to arise in the near future.

The above story is a direct outgrowth of the lab-to-land programme of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research launched during its Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1979 and we should all be thankful to the Council. This programme has also enabled the scientists to learn the problems of the clam fish-



Packets ready for the market.

ermen at first hand and to know the possible obstacles which could occur in the transfer of technology from the laboratory scale to a commer-

cial venture successfully; in fact, every partner in this programme stands to mutual gain in one way or other.

