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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
मर्त्यपालन विभाग
Department of Fisheries



MATSYA MELA - 2026



January 10 - 12, 2026



Kavaratti, Lakshadweep

MANAGE Fisheries Innovation and Startup Hub (MANAGE - FISHub)

(A National Fisheries Incubation Centre Supported by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying,
Govt. of India)

National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)

(An Autonomous Organization of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)

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Matsya Mela - 2026

Matsya Mela 2026 was a three-day national-level fisheries event organized from 10–12 January 2026 at Kavaratti, Lakshadweep. The event was jointly organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)–Lakshadweep, ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Department of Fisheries, UT Administration of Lakshadweep, ICAR–ATARI Bengaluru, and National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad. The Mela aimed to celebrate island fisheries and culture while providing a comprehensive platform for interaction among fishers, scientists, policymakers, development agencies, startups, and entrepreneurs.



MANAGE – Innovation and Startup Hub (MANAGE-FISHUB), a National Fisheries Incubation Centre supported by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, participated in the event by an exhibition stall throughout the three days. The stall served as a focal point for disseminating information on fisheries entrepreneurship, startup incubation, innovation programs, and capacity-building initiatives. The event witnessed an overall footfall of more than 30,000 participants, reflecting strong engagement from local islanders, fishers, scholars, students, startups, aspiring aquapreneurs, and other stakeholders.

Day 1

Farmer-Scientist Interface and Inaugural Session



The first day of Matsya Mela 2026 focused on strengthening linkages between science, policy, and grassroots stakeholders through Farmer-Scientist Interface sessions and a panel discussion. These deliberations highlighted pathways to improve post-harvest handling, market access, and awareness of schemes, credit, and banking support for fisheries development in the island.

Throughout the day, MANAGE-FISHub engaged with participants through its exhibition stall by disseminating information on its vision, programs, and incubation support for fisheries entrepreneurship. The stall was visited by Dr. S. B. Deepak Kumar, IAS, Advisor to the Administrator, UT of Lakshadweep; Shri Raj Thilak, IFS, Secretary (Fisheries), UTLA; Dr. Bijay Kumar Behera, Chairman, NFDB; Shri K. Buzar Jamhar, Director (Fisheries), UTLA; Dr. Grinson George, Director, ICAR-CMFRI; Dr. George Ninan, Director, ICAR-CIFT and Dr. P. N. Ananth, Principal Scientist and Head, KVK-Lakshadweep. The dignitaries appreciated the outreach, relevance, and impact of MANAGE-FISHub initiatives achieved within a short period of time, and emphasized the importance of strengthening island-specific entrepreneurship and incubation support for the fisheries sector.

Day 1 witnessed more than 11,000 footfalls, with active participation from fishers, local islanders, scholars, students, startups, and aspiring aquapreneurs, reflecting the strong interest and relevance of the event in promoting knowledge exchange, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the fisheries sector.

Day 2

Mariculture, Entrepreneurship and Stakeholder Convergence

The second day of Matsya Mela 2026 focused on entrepreneurship and livelihood diversification in island fisheries, with deliberations on mariculture-based opportunities through Farmer–Scientist Interface sessions and a Stakeholder Meet on entrepreneurship in island fisheries and mariculture. Success stories from startups and practitioners highlighted the potential of seaweed farming, marine cage culture, ornamental fisheries, and value-added enterprises.

MANAGE-FISHHub continued engaging participants through its exhibition stall by disseminating information on entrepreneurship pathways, incubation support, and enterprise development models, with particular emphasis on social entrepreneurship through SHGs and FFPOs. Interactions revealed that while innovative ideas are abundant among fishers and island youth, there is a strong need for entrepreneurial skill development, including leadership, risk-taking, and enterprise management.

Day 2 recorded more than 10,000 footfalls, reflecting growing interest among islanders, fishers, startups, and aspiring aquapreneurs in enterprise-led, diversified, and innovation-driven fisheries development, particularly in mariculture and allied value-chain activities.



Day 3

Sustainability, Conservation and Valedictory



The third and concluding day of Matsya Mela 2026 focused on sustainable marine fisheries and marine ecosystem conservation through Farmer-Scientist Interface sessions addressing resource sustainability, climate resilience, and best practices in ecosystem management. The discussions emphasised the need to balance livelihood enhancement with ecological conservation, particularly in the context of fragile island ecosystems such as Lakshadweep.



Throughout the day, MANAGE-FISHub engaged with participants by highlighting sustainability oriented entrepreneurship opportunities, including marine capture fisheries, conservation-linked enterprises, and the application of renewable energy solutions such as solar-based fish processing and drying systems. Interactions with fishers, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders reinforced the importance of promoting environmentally responsible enterprises that align economic viability with long-term resource sustainability.



An important insight that emerged from the deliberations was the need to bridge the expectation gap between fishers and industries, where fishers seek stable markets, fair pricing, and technological support, while industries emphasize quality, consistency, and sustainability. The event concluded with the Valedictory Session of Matsya Mela 2026, and Day 3 witnessed more than 8,000 participants, marking the successful culmination of three days of knowledge exchange, stakeholder engagement, and collaborative learning.

Key Takeaways

Island-Specific Fisheries Entrepreneurship Potential



Island fisheries present significant opportunities for entrepreneurship in mariculture, marine ornamental fisheries, value addition, and export-oriented activities.

Effectiveness of Collective Enterprise Models



SHGs, FFPOs, cooperatives, and community-based organizations are emerging as effective institutional platforms for inclusive, and sustainable fisheries entrepreneurship.



Need for Grassroots-Level Entrepreneurship Awareness

Strengthening entrepreneurship awareness and capacity building at the grassroots level is essential, particularly among fishers, and youth.



Fisher-Industry Expectation Gap

Differences in expectations between fishers and industries regarding quality, pricing, sustainability, and consistency need to be addressed for effective market integration.



Entrepreneurial and Soft Skill Gaps

While ideas and technical knowledge are available, gaps persist in leadership, risk-taking, communication, and enterprise management skills.



Shift from Livelihood to Enterprise Approaches

Fishers and island youth are increasingly interested in transitioning from subsistence livelihoods to enterprise-based and value-chain-oriented fisheries activities.