

resources to support long-term growth and resilience within the industry.

These clusters aim to enhance value chain integration, improve production standards, and ensure traceability and quality compliance, ultimately strengthening the position of small farmers in global markets.

For the first time, NaCSA is also facilitating relationships between specific seafood buyers and small-scale farmer organizations through its Cluster of Excellence programs.

Benefits of Shrimp Farmer Societies

For Small-Farmer Groups:

- Support sustainable livelihoods for smallholder shrimp farmers through collective organization and shared resources.
- Provide a structured organizational management model that facilitates access to international markets.
- Promote diversification into high-value, export-oriented species such as mangrove crab, sea bass, and tilapia.
- Enhance the technical, financial, and environmental sustainability of aquaculture operations through capacity building and shared best practices.
- Enable targeted financial support up to 50% assistance for SC/ST farmer societies that procure seed from SHAPHARI-certified hatcheries.



For Processors, Importers and Retailers

- Access to shrimp harvested using improved and standardized methods, ensuring higher quality and consistency.
- Opportunity to expand product offerings in the marketplace, as shrimp sourced from farmer societies meet premium quality standards.



- Increased assurance through awareness programs aimed at preventing the use of banned antibiotics, enhancing food safety and compliance.
- Strengthen Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives by supporting sustainable livelihoods and ethical sourcing from small-scale farmer societies



For Financial Institutions:

- Reduced investment risk due to organized, traceable, and well-monitored farming practices within shrimp farmer societies.
- Opportunities for stable returns through financing a profitable and environmentally sustainable sector.



For Development Agencies:

- A scalable commercial model that enables smallholder farmers to access international markets, with potential for wider replication across regions.
- Capacity-building initiatives designed to equip farmer groups with the skills and knowledge required to meet the standards of Fair Trade and other premium markets.



For Fair trade:

- Each society represents a small group of farmers who actively share information, resources and best practices.
- Most farms are small-scale, typically comprising one or a few ponds (around 0.5 hectares each) and are primarily operated by family members, with minimal reliance on hired labor.



Way forward

The organization of small-scale shrimp farmers in India is proving to be a transformative model by:

- empowering smallholder farmers,
- increasing stakeholder engagement and collaboration within farming clusters, and
- serving as an ideal framework for small-scale producers to meet evolving market requirements

This model is inherently self-sustaining and, most importantly, contributes significantly to the long-term sustainability of shrimp farming in India.

Looking ahead, Clusters of Excellence will be implemented across NaCSA-supported societies. Shrimp produced under this model will be marketed under a unique brand name, allowing products to command premium prices. This branding initiative will incentivize farmers to meet buyer specifications and ensure a consistent supply of high-quality, chemical-free, antibiotic-free, and fully traceable shrimp.

Market recognition of society-based shrimp production will not only enhance farmer incomes but also amplify the message of "Sustainable Aquaculture" across India. This approach supports a new vision for the aquaculture sector one that strengthens smallholder livelihoods, ensures environmental responsibility, and aligns Indian shrimp farming with global best practices.



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE
(MPEDA, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India)



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**EMPOWERED
SMALL AND
MARGINAL FARMER
ORGANIZATIONS
GEARING UP FOR
INTERNATIONAL
MARKETS**



National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture
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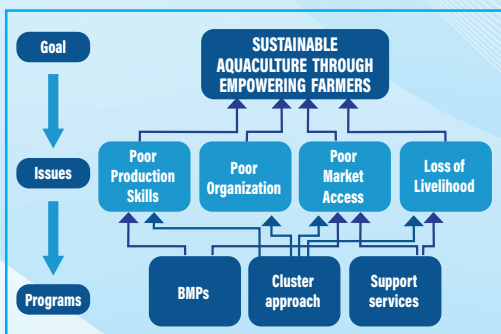
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Background

Over 90% of shrimp farmers in India are small-scale operators, each with a landholding of less than 2.0 hectares, out of an estimated 100,000 individuals engaged in shrimp farming. In recent times, these farmers have faced increasing distress due to fluctuating farm-gate prices, which are largely driven by market demand and supply dynamics. For small farmers who rely solely on shrimp farming for their livelihood, each production cycle represents a significant risk. The uncertainty in returns places their income and food security in a vulnerable position. In this context, establishing a mechanism that ensures access to reliable markets and guarantees a minimum support price would be crucial. Such a system would enable small-scale farmers to sustain their operations and secure their livelihoods.



NaCSA mission and Programs



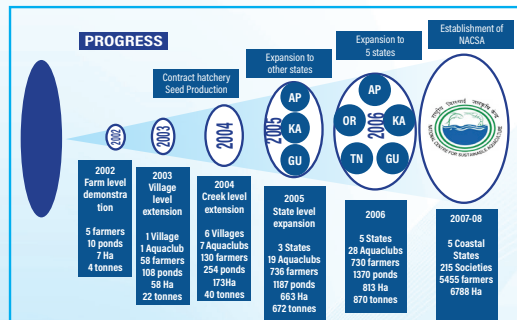
The National Center for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA), established in 2007 by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), focuses on organizing small-scale aquaculture farmers into cohesive groups within specific geographic areas. These farmer groups are often formed around shared

resources such as a common water supply channel which serve as the basis for collective action and management. By encouraging farmers to work collaboratively rather than individually, NaCSA promotes the realization of mutual benefits including improved resource utilization, enhanced productivity, and better market access. Over time, many of these informal groups have evolved into legally recognized Societies, providing them with a formal structure and greater institutional support.

Establishment

The five-year collaborative project between MPEDA and NACA (2002–2006) laid the foundation for the establishment of the National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA). Initiated in Mogalturu, Andhra Pradesh, in

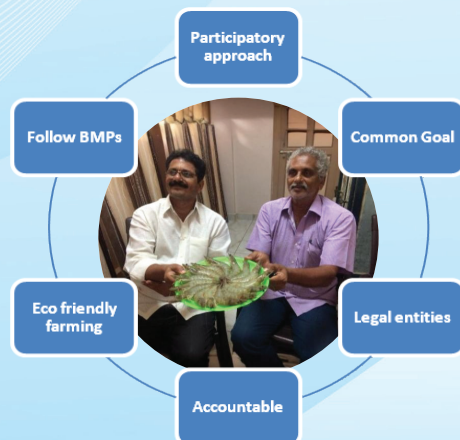
2002, the program proven to be a major success in fostering a participatory movement among shrimp farmers across the country. Its success demonstrated the potential of farmer-led initiatives in promoting sustainable aquaculture practices nationwide.



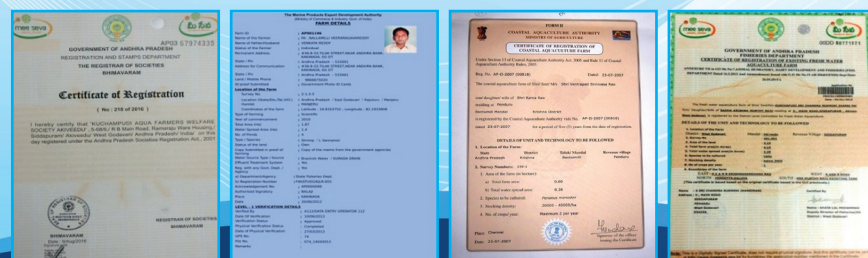
Shrimp Farmer Societies

Approximately 775 small farmer societies have been established across nine coastal states of India, each comprising between 10 to 75 registered farmers. These societies are structured with clear organizational frameworks, enforce strict membership criteria, and are governed by elected board members. Membership continues to grow steadily and currently stands at nearly 18,012 registered farmers.

State	Number of societies	Number of farmers
Andhra Pradesh	630	14234
Tamil Nadu	49	974
Odisha	32	1071
Karnataka & Goa	22	412
Kerala	03	42
West Bengal	38	1259
Maharashtra	01	20
Total	775	18012



The societies were established following a model developed by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA). Each society is legally registered with the Ministry of Revenue and is subject to annual audits by government authorities to verify financial accounts and ensure democratic and transparent management practices.



Promoting science based practices for sustainable farming

NaCSA provides technical and scientific support to farmers to help them meet the stringent quality and environmental standards required by international markets. Professional management systems have been implemented to oversee and regulate the operations of farmer societies.

One of the most significant outcomes of these efforts has been a noticeable reduction in disease prevalence, along with improved productivity and profitability among aquaculture farmer societies, achieved through the adoption of Better Management Practices (BMPs).

To further support these initiatives, Aqua One Centres (AOCs) have been established near farming areas to test water and soil quality parameters, ensuring a scientific approach to sustainable aquaculture.



Advantages of Farmer Societies

Farmer societies operate with a strong commitment to core values such as food safety, environmental sustainability, adherence to good aquaculture practices, transparency, and legal compliance.

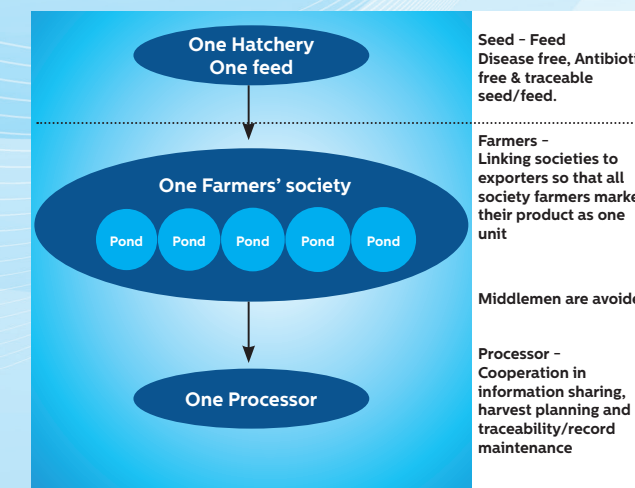
Currently, all members are engaged in the culture of white-leg shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*), maintaining a stocking density of 30–40 post-larvae per square meter. Both post-larvae and feed are sourced exclusively from approved suppliers and are fully traceable throughout the production cycle.



Farmer societies offer numerous advantages due to established controls that help ensure compliance with the basic requirements of the international

market, including standards for social and environmental responsibility as well as food safety.

- Existing aquaculture societies monitored by government officers demonstrate a high level of compliance with democratic processes and transparency in governance.
- All society-based shrimp farmers are registered either with the Coastal Aquaculture Authority of India (CAA) or through MPEDA's farm enrolment system.
- Robust traceability systems are in place, allowing shrimp to be tracked back to specific farms and hatcheries through comprehensive record-keeping at all operational levels.
- Better Management Practices (BMPs), as recommended by NaCSA, are actively implemented and monitored to ensure hygiene standards and the safety of shrimp produced by society farmers.



- Society farmers are well-acquainted with export requirements and standards
- Regular training and capacity-building programs are conducted to keep farmers updated on sustainable practices, regulatory changes, and market expectations.

Partnership for Sustainable Aquaculture

NaCSA is developing an innovative partnership model that brings together individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds to collaborate toward the sustainable development of India's aquaculture sector. This approach requires partners to collectively commit and contribute human, financial, and natural