

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing Visited ICAR-NBFGR's Facility at Lakshadweep

Agatti, Lakshadweep, 08 January 2026

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing, comprising fifteen Hon'ble Members of Parliament and led by the Hon'ble Chairman, Shri Charanjit Singh Channi, visited the facility of the ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR) at Agatti Island, Lakshadweep, on 08 January 2026. ICAR-NBFGR is operating a Live Germplasm Resource Centre for Marine Ornamental Organisms at Agatti Island, focusing on the conservation of indigenous aquatic genetic resources and the enhancement of sustainable livelihoods for local island communities. The facility integrates scientific conservation with community-based development through hand-holding support to Community Aquaculture Units managed by local women beneficiaries, who rear captive-bred marine ornamentals to marketable size as an alternative income-generating activity. Dr. Kajal Chakraborty, Director, ICAR-NBFGR, highlighted that the initiative represents a unique model in which science-driven conservation and societal development are progressed simultaneously through native biological resources. The Hon'ble Chairman and Members of the Committee visited the Marine Ornamental Display Unit established under the Tribal Sub-Plan programme of ICAR-NBFGR, where more than 75 species of rare ornamental aquatic organisms, including fishes and invertebrates, are maintained and exhibited for public awareness and education. The Committee appreciated the institute's innovative approach of generating supplementary income for women beneficiaries through entry fee collection from visitors. The Committee subsequently visited the breeding and rearing facility and interacted with women beneficiaries managing the Community Aquaculture Units. On this occasion, the Hon'ble Chairman formally launched the upscaling of seed production of a high-value ornamental shrimp species (*Stenopus hispidus*) by introducing a breeding pair into the rearing system. The Members also interacted with the participating women beneficiaries to understand the programme's socio-economic impact on household income and community empowerment.



The visit was attended by Ms. Neetu Kumari Prasad, IAS, Joint Secretary (Fisheries), MoFAHD, Govt. of India; Shri Rajthilak, IFS, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Union Territory of Lakshadweep; Dr. B. K. Behera, Chief Executive, NFDB; Dr. Kajal Chakraborty, Director, ICAR-NBFGR; Shri Maheswar, Director, Lok Sabha Secretariat; and Dr. T. T. Ajith Kumar, Head, PAGR, ICAR-NBFGR, among other officials. The visit reaffirmed the Committee's recognition of ICAR-NBFGR's efforts in linking scientific conservation of aquatic genetic resources with sustainable livelihood development in ecologically sensitive island ecosystems.

