Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT):
Initiatives beneficial to fish vendors and small retailers

The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) was set up in 1957 under the Department of Agriculture of the then Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The administrative control of the institute was brought under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research from 1 October 1967. The mandate of the institute is to evolve innovative and cost-effective technologies for fish harvest in the marine and inland sectors, to develop and standardize various aspects of post-harvest technologies, to develop technologies for extraction of biomedical, pharmaceutical and industrial products from aquatic organisms, to act as a repository of information on harvest and post-harvest technologies with a systematic database, to conduct transfer of technology through training, education and extension programmes, provide consultancy services, and popularize the innovations for the overall development of the fishery industry.

Some of the initiatives of CIFT, in technology development and transfer, which can benefit fish vendors are listed below:

1. Technologies and practices for hygienic handling and preservation of fish
   CIFT has developed technologies for hygienic handling and preservation of fish. This includes proper icing, handling practices, packaging, etc. These technologies have been transferred to stakeholders through awareness and training programmes.
   - Ice fish ratio of 1:1 is recommended for preservation of fresh fish
   - Palm impression technique for creating awareness on hygienic handling.
   - Cleaning schedule for vending surfaces
   - Cloritest paper for testing chlorine level in water and ice
   - **Containers for packing fish:**
     - Polypropylene containers insulated with polyurethane foam (PUF).
     - Fibre-reinforced plastic (FRP) boxes with PUF insulation. This has been distributed in different States of the northeast hill (NEH) region.
     - Insulated bag (tuna bag) was developed for onboard storage, which can be adapted by vendors also.

2. Fish vending table
   - Hygienic fish cutting table suitable for hygienic vending of fish, with provision for chopping board, splash guard, washing, waste collecting and drainage facilities

3. Driers
   - Various driers using unconventional energy sources for drying of fish
   - Proper drying practices for different types of fish
4. Waste management

Cost-effective and cheap technology for preparation of ensilage from fish-processing wastes, using formic acid

5. Fish kiosk

A fish kiosk for sale of value-added fish products was set up at Azheekal, Vypeen, a fishing village in Cochin. The kiosk is operated by the Kumarandayogam Mahilasamajam, a women’s organization, members of which were trained at CIFT in the hygienic handling of fish and preparation of value-added products, including fish pickles, fish curry, fish cutlets and dried fish products as part of their self-help group activity. The kiosk can be used by groups of fisherwomen for sale of value-added as well as fresh fish.

6. Design for retail market

A ‘fish marketing development centre’ at Pudimadaka, Andhra Pradesh, was inaugurated on 2 June 2009. Pudimadaka is a traditional marine fish landing centre about 60 km south of Visakhapatnam. It is a major hub for marketing of fish catches brought by the traditional fishermen. Unlike the traditional fish markets, in this new fish marketing development centre, facilities for hygienic fish marketing, and basic amenities like drinking water, washing area, rest rooms, etc. are provided. The centre was built by an NGO, District Fishermen Youth Welfare Association, with funds provided by Oxfam-India Ltd., with the technical assistance and advice of the CIFT centre at Visakhapatnam. It has 22 fish vending platforms with granite slabs, convenient for easy cleaning and hygienic maintenance.

7. Consultancy for upgradation of existing markets

Technical consultancy was given to the Corporation of Cochin for upgrading existing fish markets.

Capacity building

Awareness and training programmes are conducted for fishermen and fisherwomen on hygienic handling of fish, preparation of value-added products, etc. regularly at the institute as well as in the field.

Training programmes offered by CIFT, which are useful for fish vendors, are briefly listed below. Specific training programmes to suit their felt needs are also undertaken from time to time.

1. Production of value-added fish products
2. Hygienic handling of fish
3. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) concepts
4. Seafood quality assurance
5. Battered and breaded products

Source: Email communication from Director, CIFT, dated 4 November 2009.