

Sustainable pearl farming using new techniques of spat collectors in Zanzibar

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Marine pearl culture is an important aquaculture industry in the world. Currently, there is a growing interest in pearl culture production among Tanzanian coastal societies primarily due to opportunity as an alternative income generation activity and also a way of using the ocean in a sustainable manner. Attempts to culture pearls have been successful especially in Zanzibar, Mafia and Mtwara. However, in order to make it sustainable spat collection experiments were initiated in two villages of Bweleo and Nyamanzi in Zanzibar. Communities were trained on how to use these various spat collection techniques and how to maintain them until the oysters are ready for seeding. Different types of spat collectors were used and this will be elaborated in the presentation. The targeted species were *P. margaritifera* and *Pteria* sp. Based on the results of this study, it is possible to obtain good numbers of pearl oyster spats and grow them. It is also possible to produce relatively good quality half-pearls within a short period of 9 months using *P. margaritifera*. The establishment of such an industry would provide much needed alternative income activity among Tanzanian coastal communities while serving in utilizing coastal resources in a sustainable way. Both men and women were involved in the experiments.