THEME 3: FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES UTILIZATION

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Contact address: flowereze@yahoo.com, msuya@ims.udsm.ac.tz Abstract

Abstract

Since its start in 1989, the seaweed farming industry in Tanzania has been based on selling dry seaweed to middle men who export in bulk. A recent world market preference of *Kappaphycus alvarezii* for its stronger kappa gel than iota from *Eucheuma denticulatum* has raised the farm gate price of the former above that of the latter. Coupled with this is the lower resistance of K. alvarezii to environmental variations which results in die-offs in many locations. Due to the two factors, farmers have been forced to farm and sell the lower priced seaweed. A recent initiative in the Zanzibar Islands has enabled the farmers to add value to the low priced *E. denticulatum* by producing value added products. Such value added products that are already in circulation are seaweed soap (bar soap), dry seaweed powder and body creams. Three types of cakes, jellies and puddings have been tried. Whereas the soaps are sold for bathing purposes, the seaweed powder is sold to other producers of seaweed soap. The main markets for these products are on Zanzibar (mainly tourists and tourist hotels) and mainland Tanzania where local people (direct users and traders) are the main buyers. New markets coming up are from USA and South Africa. Other products that are to be produced are liquid soaps, shampoos, crackers, candies and so on. At this initial stage of the initiative, seaweed is added to soaps in powder form whereas food products are made by using mainly wet seaweed. Coupled with value addition is the modification of the farming method where a new technique, the deep-water floating lines system, which uses nylon ropes (no wooden stakes), is being used to enable the farmers produce the environmental stricken species. The technique combines the placing of basket "dema" traps under the floating systems to catch fish that seek shelter under the systems. Results so far show higher growth rates and more seaweed production per unit area than the off-bottom method. The innovation initiative is coordinated under the Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative, comprising of farmers, scientists, private sector, and government departments. It is expected that after five to ten years, seaweed farmers in Zanzibar will produce and sell a number of seaweed value added products as well as produce the higher priced seaweed for their individual benefit, their families, communities, and the country at large.

Key words: Seaweed, Innovation, Value addition, ZaSCI