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PEARL FORMATION (Mollusca)

Pearls is also called "Moti". It is white, highly shining globular in shape and made by the clam, a mollusc called Oyster within its shell. Pearls are prized as gems from ancient times. Pearls are among the most beautiful and valuable of our jewels. Kokichi Mikimoto of Toda (Japan) is known to be the father of Pearl Industry. He discovered a method to induce foreign particle between the mantle and the shell of the pearl Oyster and thus stimulated pearl formation.

Pearl Formation or Pearl Fisheries

A pearl is a result of an injury to mollusc. It is secreted by the mantle as a means of

Protection against some foreign body. Whenever a foreign body ~~some~~ such as a particle of sand or a small parasite (trematode or cestode larva), a small animalcule or alga or even bit of shell, gets between the mantle and the shell it becomes enclosed in a sac of mantle epithelium which is thus irritated. Irritation stimulates the mantle epithelium to secrete nacre thin concentric layers of mother of pearl all around the foreign body. The amount of deposition is in direct proportion to the degree of irritation. At the end of several years, a pearl is formed.

Pearl Molluscs

Pearls are often found in clams and edible oysters but these are not nacreous and therefore, they are of little value. Most precious pearls are found in pearl oysters of the genus *Pinctada*. Important species for pearls are *P. vulgaris*, *P. chinensis* etc, and *P. atropurpurea* found in Indian waters. *P. vulgaris* which is closely allied to freshwater mussel is common species distributed in Gulf of

Kutch, Gulf of Manner and the Falk Bay and
Broder