



Fishing in Troubled Waters

Increased fragility of an already precarious livelihood

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Developed around the adaptation of an interview* of

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This is a DocPost Special on the livelihood issues of the traditional fishing communities. It contains a collection of articles and reports which have been organised and pieced together with a narrative.

The document may appear to be disjointed at times. This is a characteristic of such an output, since it contains materials needed by activists and communities, but is not in the nature of an academic research.

* 'A good occasion for change', an interview with John Kurien by *V S Sridhar*, Frontline, Volume 22 - Issue 03, Jan. 29 - Feb 11, 2005. <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2203/stories/20050211005601800.htm>
[C.ELDOC1.tsunami/TS1-good_occasion_for_change-John_Kurien.html]

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Fishing communities in Tamil Nadu, while they lived, were rarely the centre of attention in civil society. Now that so many of them have been taken away by the sea and thousands are faced with a shattered future, they are the focus of an outpouring of concern.

Tsunamis affect only coastal communities - but not everyone suffers equally. Those living nearer the sea suffer much more than those who live away from the coastline. And the poor are affected to a much greater degree than the rich.

Men, their boats and the sea

They sail 200 kilometres into the sea, five men in a boat, in search of bigger and better fish. Often, their boats leave the shore at night to return only the next morning, for night is the best time to catch big fish.

Muniappan works in someone else's boat to procure enough money for his daughter's marriage. He points to a man resting nearby, saying that even though he works in the city, he comes back to his village every weekend to fish. Has he ever thought of switching to a less hazardous and, perhaps, more lucrative profession, we ask. "I've studied only up to class five, and know nothing except fishing. But even if I had the choice, I'd probably still choose to fish. There's nothing quite like it in the whole world!" says he.

Just then, a couple of fishing boats come ashore. The first to reach is the Velraj. "Did you have good luck today?" we ask. Sanjiv, one of the three labourers on the boat, smiles. "We'll probably make Rs.500 from today's catch - the owner will get Rs.350 and we'll get Rs.50 each." It's not much from an entire day's hard labour, but Sanjiv and his friends still whistle and sing as they pull the boat on to the beach. Often, their catch is better than this - "in the rains, though the sea is choppy, we've managed to net Rs.5,000 worth of fish in a day!" says he. It evens out, though: "for when there are severe storms we don't take the boat out, and consequently, earn nothing," Sanjiv says. His wife sells fish to supplement their household income. "Even so, life is not easy," he sighs. Perhaps, that is why he is ensuring that his young son and daughter study hard. "At least then they will have a choice... which most people of my generation have not had," he says.

"We know that our job is dangerous," says Muniappan, "we also know we have no fixed income, for one day we get only Rs. 50, but another day we could get Rs. 500 too! But all our lives we've lived off the harvest of the sea, we don't know how else to earn a living."

Men, their boats and the sea, Geetanjali Krishna, Business Standard, March 18, 2006. [C.ELDOC1.h54/18marO6bsb1.pdf]

Fishing in Tamil Nadu has come to a virtual standstill after the tsunami.

Fisher folk have been gripped by fear. The sea is something they thought they understood. Those who have ventured out into the sea have also noticed major changes in the configuration of the bottom structure of the coast. Those who used to fish over natural reefs find that reefs even at depths of 50 metres are covered by sand. Fishing potential has been ruined in many places. They have also noted changes in fishing currents. They are unable to explain all this. They have lost their families, assets, resources, and are suffering in many ways after the tsunami. It was sudden and the scale of devastation has also been immense. Everybody - the government, NGOs and civil society - has been taken by surprise. The relief response has been fairly okay. But when it comes to rehabilitation, there are two sets of issues.

One, there has been the lack of a clear policy, which addresses the issues of safety of fisher folk and their livelihoods. Secondly, along the coastline there is no credible organisation that identifies closely with the fishing communities. Had there been well-functioning networks of cooperatives among the fishing communities, which give credit to fisher folk and enable the marketing of their produce, they would also have acted as a credible vehicle for relief and rehabilitation after the tsunami.

Like all other development departments of the state government, the Department of Fisheries, is project-oriented, not people or community-oriented. It does not have a sustained presence in the fishing villages. It functions mainly as a vehicle for doling out development goodies. Fishing communities have had to fend for themselves.

Government Schemes for Fisher folk in Tamil Nadu

- * *Fishermen's free housing scheme*
- * *National savings cum reliefscheme for marine fishermen /women*
- * *Group accident Insurance scheme for fishermen*
- * *Funeral expenses to fishermen family*

Demand No.7, Fisheries Department Policy Note 2005-2006, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department, Govt of Tamil Nadu, [http://www.tn.gov.in/policynotes/fisheries-1 .htm](http://www.tn.gov.in/policynotes/fisheries-1.htm)

This is owing to a combination of factors ranging from cultural, caste, spatial and other considerations.

Fishers change vocation

The fishers claim that the sea was suddenly alien to them. While there was evidence that fishing operations were coming back to normalcy, in several areas fear psychosis continued to be a threat to resuming operations.

Some of the fishers, for example in Akkarapettai moved into land based activities, including house construction. Even the many categories of people who came into the village regularly for fish trade and allied activities and for various other purposes confined their stay to the daylight hours and returned before 5pm.

Post-tsunami rehabilitation of fishing communities and fisheries-based livelihoods in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, Jan 18-19, 2006, Chennai, ICSF. [C.ELDOCI.tsunami/venkatesh-salagrama-report.pdf]

The Fishing Community

Fisher folk are at the fringe of the sea. They belong to the lower castes. Nobody cares for them in normal times. Who ever cared how the fishing communities near Nagapattinam or Cuddalore were faring before the tsunami?

There are also specific cultural traits attributed to them, most of them being stereotypes. They are regarded as spendthrifts, perpetually drunk and violent. All these characteristics could be applied to any other community, but it sticks in the case of fisher folk.

All over the country, not just in Tamil Nadu, the fisher folk are culturally, socially and politically social outliers even though they may be economically better off than other poor communities.



They come into focus only during times of elections because they form a concentrated and large vote bank. Political parties find it easy to tap that potential. The community's contact with the state is very tenuous. For instance, the State and Central governments have done nothing creative to address the problems posed by the Sri Lankan Navy to fishermen from the Nagapattinam area. Instead, political parties have been harping on the Katchativu issue alone, which is actually a non-issue for fishermen. If, in normal times, the state is unable to interact and intervene to address the problems of the fisher folk, how can one expect an imaginative response from it after a disaster?

Religious influences within the community

Religious differences among fisherfolk evolved about 500 years ago. The main change was from Hinduism to Christianity. In Kanyakumari, almost all the fisherfolk are Christians. The Church is the main social and cultural organization. Issues relating to fishing are very much mediated under the auspices of the Church. The Church committee may be composed of the richer people in the village; often, the merchants who dominate. The ordinary fisherman may not be in an influential position. It may be that someone who acts as a representative of the Church, but one who has a dual role as a merchant, who may be in an influential position.

But this situation has been changing in the past 10 years or so. One of the important reasons for the change is the presence of fishermen's cooperatives. These are not government cooperatives but are run by fisherfolk.

Caste panchayats are dominant in most other parts of the state. In the stretch from Nagapattinam right up to the Andhra Pradesh coast, the "panchayats" of the fishing castes play an important part. They are hierarchical and the headman's is usually a hereditary position. What the headman says is final, but there is definitely a transparent process by which decisions are taken in the panchayat. Issues are discussed in the open.

Caste System in the Community

There are three major castes, each dominating an ecosystem, the Pattinavars of the Bay of Bengal coast, the Paravas of the Gulf of Mannar coast and the Mukkuvas of the Arabian sea coast.

Pattinavars are Hindus while Paravas and Mukkuvas are Catholic. Pattinavars have expanded into Southern Andhra coast in the last century or so; Paravas also have hamlets on Arabian sea coast up to Kollam in Kerala; Mukkuvas occupy the area from Kanyakumari to Kollam cutting across the Kerala border. Palk Bay and northern end of Gulf of Mannar are occupied by assortment of fishing castes (Ambalakarars, Karaiyars) and some non-fishing castes (Vanniyars, Nadars) involved in fishing. There is also a smattering of other communities here and there.

Among the Pattinavars, social control mechanisms are the strongest, with the 'panchayat' being answerable to the entire community. On the other hand, the governing system in the Christian areas is the village/parish committee under the parish priest with the leadership having less local accountability. Mechanised boat ownership is within the community but concentrated in specific pockets or villages resulting in conflicts between the mechanised boat sector and artisanal sector. Women traditionally are not part of the governance systems in general, but are an emerging factor in the Kanyakumari district.

Conflict management has largely been internal, till the introduction of mechanised boats. Conflict has been due to differential access to resources or due to difference in techniques and scales of fishing. 'Mechanised' and 'Artisanal' have become two permanent interest groups in conflict with each other for resources.

Fishing Communities of Tamil Nadu: Traditional Governance and Post Tsunami Responses, Chennai, Feb 15, 2006. [C.ELDOC1.0604/TS1_trinetcommrep.html]

Parish Priests as Community Leaders

- * The coastal village speaks a different language, every time a new parish priest comes-a new slant-a new ideology.*
- * It reduces scope for emergence of local leadership on a sustained basis.*
- * It reduces answerability/accountability-it is an outside leader who gets transferred every two years or so who answers, so the villagers do not grow mature by a process of answerability.*
- * It does not allow consistency of articulation by the village regarding its activities, processes and goals.*

Role of Governance Structures in Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Management, Trinet workshop on Fishing Communities of Tamil Nadu, Feb 15, 2006. [C.ELDOC1.tsunami/governance-KK.pdf]

Fishing Craft and Gear

All the fishermen were originally catamaran fishermen. It is only in the last two or three decades that they have graduated to other craft. Government statistics show that more than 60 per cent of the fishermen depend on them.

Just as you cannot have all landowners and no agricultural workers, you cannot have all boat owners and workers with no equipment. But there is much greater asset fluidity among fishermen. A catamaran owner may sell his boat to work on someone else's if he gets a good share of the catch.



It is also significant that despite the increasing capital intensity in fishing, the sharing pattern has not changed significantly in favour of capital as one would normally expect. This is because the caste panchayats, where decisions are communally determined, have not allowed it.

Details of Fishing Craft in Tamil Nadu 2002-2003

Place	Mechanised boats	Vallam	Catamarans	Total
Kanyakumari (East)	232	130	1194	1556
Kanyakumari (West)	1429	4077	4357	9863
Tamil Nadu	11889	23109	33038	68036

Endeavour and Achievements 2002-03, Dept of Fisheries, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2004.

Fishing Activities as per Social Status (may vary from village to village)

Group	Poorest	Poor	Middle	Better off
Boat type and cost	No boat	2-3 person catamarans (Rs.25,000 with nets) Powered by sail or possibly by a 6-7hp outboard motor (Rs.70,000 with nets)	4-5 person FRP 'maruti' fibreglass boat with a 9hp outboard motor (Rs.1,89,000 with nets)	5-8 person trawler with mechanised nets and a 12-14hp outboard motor
Caste	Fishermen, SC, MBC	Mainly fishermen, also SC / MBC	Fishermen	Fishermen
Fishing details	Fishermen caste: Labourers on boats SC/ MBC: Labourers in fishing related activities e.g. carrying fish from boat to shore, breaking ice etc.	4 km from shore Go out 3am - 9am	25km from shore 3am - 9am if successful; can stay up to a day and a half at sea	30-70km from shore, moving North to South and vice versa from midnight 2 days-1 week at sea Rest 2-3 days between trips

Ownership of Boats and Sharing the Catch

The catch is shared between the owner and the labourers according to an agreed ratio. There are slight variations from village to village but typically the cost of diesel is deducted and the remainder is split into two; the owner gets 50% and the other 50% is shared equally among the workers. While the owner gets a larger share of catch he is also responsible for regular maintenance, diesel for motor repairs to the boat and replacement of nets (every couple of years or so). Usually the labourers are relatives (and hence same caste) as the owner.



Rapid Livelihoods Assessment Post-tsunami in the districts of Cuddalore, Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu) and Karaikal (Pondicherry Union Territory), Sonya LeJeune, Save the Children, Feb 2005.
[C.ELDOC1.tsunami/rapid-livelihood-assessment.pdf]

Group Ownership

Group ownership does not exist in the Tamil Nadu fishery and all previous attempts at introducing group ownership through Government and NGO programmes have been unsuccessful. However, it is important to note that the fisherman who does not own any fishing equipment is not necessarily the "poorest of the poor". Only families with more than one male member in fishing find it economical to own a kattumaram or motorised boat. Skill, management capacity, etc., also play a role in determining who is an owner and who is just a worker. All owners in the artisanal fishery are also workers.

South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies Rehabilitation of Fishing Units in Tsunami affected Tamil Nadu, http://www.tsunami2004-india.org/downloads/recommendations_on_fishing_livelihoods.doc
[C.ELDOC1.0604/TS1_recommendations_on_fishing_livelihoods-new.html]

Impact of Increase in Commercialisation and the Entry of Merchant Capital

With trawlerisation, ownership is completely with absentee owners. In Chennai, politicians, film stars and other wealthy sections own large vessels. Without doubt there are class differences and these manifest themselves in economic differences. The good thing since the tsunami is that all this has been opened up. The caste panchayats can be made to change. They have to deal with the outside world and should be engaged by social activists.

Ensuring Safety on Land

The Coastal Regulation Zone

The tsunami has shown that fishermen are far safer at sea than on land. That sea has to do with where the fisherman is situated on the land. This has to do with the rights that fisher folk should have regarding where they can stay.

This is where the regulations governing the use of the coastal zone come into play. The provisions of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) are only part of the Environment Protection Act, and do not have the teeth that a formal legislation exclusively meant for this would have had.

The regulations have been flouted with impunity and all kinds of exemptions have been given by governmental agencies. In the process, the housing safety issues of fisher folk have been neglected. Today, no fishing community feels safe on land. I think, as a priority people should be given property rights to land that is safely situated on the coastline. The 500 metres pullback zone should be a "no development" zone in which there are only benign user rights.

No construction activity should be allowed here, not even for fisher folk or for tourists. Good, decent housing for fishermen can be built in the land that is contiguous to this stretch of the coastline. This is where the safety and livelihood issues overlap.

Housing and livelihood are intimately connected. Unless fisher folk have a safe habitat, they cannot have a secure livelihood. Secure livelihoods are in turn dependent on housing, water, sanitation and other social infrastructure. Fisher folk are not necessarily poor. They get a lot of cash incomes. But this never translates into a better quality of life because they are caught in a vicious circle of not being able to have a secure livelihood owing to lack of safety and amenities. It is important to recognise that fisher folk contribute as much to the economy as tourism does. So, why are their rights neglected?

For more information on CRZ refer to

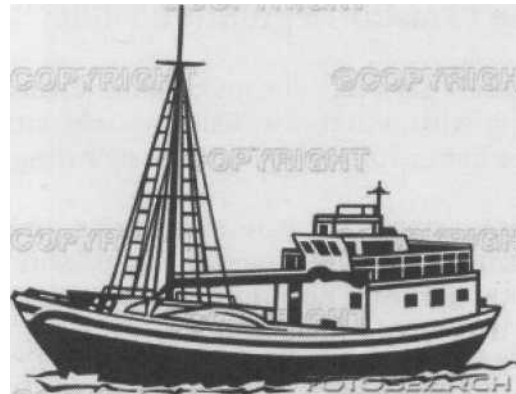
"Our Coast Our Right - a backgrounder on CRZ", produced by Centre for Education and Documentation, Bangalore.

[BE31bC61] Or logon to www.rdc.net.in

The Trawler Menace

Pre-tsunami, the mechanised trawlers were already over capitalised and facing great economic hardship. Tamil Nadu has the largest fleet of trawlers in the country and disproportionate to its coastline length and fish resources. These boats were surviving only by poaching on resources in the waters of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Sri Lanka.

These vessels, costing Rs. 15-20 lakhs to replace, operate often at the cost of the small fishermen and the fish resource base. It is



TRAWLER

<http://www.fotosearch.com/UNC114/102-00693>

Motorisation of Traditional Crafts

Tamil Nadu government extends assistance to fishermen in motorisation of traditional crafts by installation of inboard engines and outboard motors in vallams and catamarans.

The expenditure on this scheme is equally shared by State and Centre. Under this scheme, 50% cost of engine subject to a ceiling of Rs. 12,000/- for inboard engines or Rs. 10,000/- for outboard motors is given as subsidy. The balance 50% cost is to be borne by the beneficiary.

The traditional fishermen are also given a subsidy of Rs. 6,000/- per individual for the purchase of fishing net under the scheme. From 1987-1988 to 2000-2001, 13,925 engines and 2886 fishing nets have been distributed to the traditional fishermen.

Demand No. 7, Policy Note 2002-2003, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department (Fisheries), Govt of Tamil Nadu, <http://www.tn.gov.in/policynotes/archives/policy2002-03/fish2002-03-a.htm>

therefore not advisable to replace *in toto* the trawlers that have been damaged in the tsunami. While it may be unfair not allowing an owner, whose trawler was damaged, to repair or replace it, there is a need to provide incentives for at least some of the trawler owners to leave the fishery. While compensation can be provided for the loss, they can be encouraged to invest the money in other businesses or even in small boats. For those who wish to replace the damaged boats, entirely new boats may not be advisable. Purchase of second hand boats from other major centres can be encouraged so that the high concentration of trawlers in those centres can be reduced. The trawl

Mechanisation is not a solution

Mechanisation is not the solution. The UN is trying to have a ban on trawlers all over the world. The number of trawlers here is already more than what the beach can take. So these trawlers will displace the traditional beach-based fisher people. And this will make the livelihood situation worse than what it is now.

Interview: Fr Thomas Kocherry, Priya C Nair & Shruti Kulkarni, Thiruvananthapuram, 27 April 2006.
[C.ELDOC1.tsunami/interview-Tom-Kocherry.doc]

workers can be encouraged to join the small-scale artisanal fishing which will be able to expand if the trawl fleet is reduced.

There should be no more addition to the trawler capacity. This also calls for a policy. The government should recognise that fish production has not increased significantly in the past seven to eight years. Adding trawler capacity involving fresh investments just does not make sense. The running costs of operating a trawler are going up but the output is stagnant. Fishermen in Nagapattinam have been reeling under debt because of this. Basically, there are too many trawlers.

The crew of a trawler would not mind going on a catamaran now, because it is a matter of subsistence. It is possible to provide them with catamarans.

In Kerala, a lot of the people working on trawlers are not from the fishing community. But in Tamil Nadu more than 90 per cent of those working on trawlers are from the fishing community. A catamaran is something they already know and would not mind owning now, to earn a livelihood.

Marine fish production craft wise for the year 2002-2003 (Quantity in tones)

Place	Mechanised	Non Mechanised	Motorised	Shore Seine	Total	Percentage
Kanyakumari	332	12523	3354	3434	19643	5.18
Tamil Nadu	200468	93421	79474	5851	379214	100

Endeavour and Achievements 2002-03, Dept of Fisheries, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2004

Bigger Fish Significant for Repopulation

Fishing practices followed in most parts of the world are inherently flawed and threaten not only the future supply of fish but also the long-term survival of some species, experts say. The big, fat, older fish - the very animals targeted under current fishing practices - are far more important to repopulate the species than the smaller, younger fish, according to scientists.

The regulations adopted worldwide seek to encourage netting the large fish so that younger and fast-growing fish can reach spawning age. But new science says this thinking would not help if the objective were to make fishing sustainable and rebuild fast-depleting fish stocks.



Scientists have known for a while that large fish can spawn larvae exponentially greater than those produced by their younger counterparts. They discovered from studies on black rockfish (*Sebastes melanops*), found along the US West Coast, that a 50 centimetre-long specimen produces nearly 200,000 larvae, while an 80 cm

fish produces a staggering 10 times more - nearly 2 million.* Besides, larvae of older and bigger fish have better odds of survival. The reason: older mothers produce larvae with a larger oil globule that helps baby fish survive starvation, caused mainly by sudden demise of microscopic marine plants called phytoplankton.

Scientists say one of the practical ways to arrest further damage due to commercial fisheries is to go for some sort of ocean zoning. Some (zones should be) totally protected, some closed seasonally, some open to commercial fishing, some only for recreational fishing and so on. This can protect the age structure and maintain the big, older fish.

As fish harvests were increasing in the 1960s, many had thought that better technology and intensified exploitation of new species could eventually increase worldwide landings from 60 million tons in 1966, to 440-550 million tons by the turn of the century. But the global fish catch has stagnated at below 100 million tons - in 2002, a total of 93.2 million tons of fish were caught, according to the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization.

(*Source : UCSC's Long Marine Laboratory published a paper in the May 2004 issue of Ecology, Volume 84, No 5.

Fishing flaws, Down to Earth, 31 March 2005.[C.ELDOC1.K51/31mar05dte.htm]

Industrial fishing emptying the seas

Giant ships, using state-of-the-art sonar, can pinpoint schools of fish quickly and accurately. The ships are basically floating buildings with fish processing and packing plants, huge

Global Industrial Fishing Leads to Faster Depletion of Fish Resources

New developments in industrial fishing over the last few decades have led to a rapid oversupply of super sized vessels plundering the ocean. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, about 70% of our global fisheries are now being fished close to, already at or beyond their capacity.

Flush with subsidies, the growing global industrial fishing fleet is rapidly outstripping the supply of fish. Scientists recently warned that large predatory fish species have been depleted by as much as 99% in the past century.

The first to suffer the consequences of the global plunder are ocean wildlife and local subsistence fishermen. "Dirty" fishing gear like longlines, monofilament lines stretching up to 60 miles and baited with thousands of hooks, catch and kill large number of non-targeted catch.

A recent report estimates that longlines catch and kill an estimated 4.4 million sharks, sea turtles, seabirds, billfish and marine mammals in the Pacific each year. Scientists warn that the endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle, often caught on longlines could go extinct in the next 5-30 years unless the threat of longlines is reversed.

As Jean Ziegler, a UN expert on the right to food, said in a recent report to the Geneva-based UN Commission on Human Rights, "In the drive to industrialise, privatise and orient fish production towards exports, poor fishing and fish-farming communities are often left behind."

The consequences are not surprising. Job losses are mounting among coastal fishing communities already hit hard by erosion and climate change. As foreign vessels export fish once destined for local markets, local prices have shot up, at the same time, global prices have collapsed.

Fishing: The New Resource War -- An ENN Commentary, Robert Ovetz, April 07, 2005. <http://www.enn.com/today.html?id=7486> [C.ELDOC.tsunami/TS1_The_New_Resource_War.html]

freezing systems, fishmeal processing plants, and powerful engines to drag enormous fishing gear through the ocean. Wherever they operate, industrial fishing fleets exceed the ocean's ecological limits. The trend of the past century is of fishing down the food chain. As larger fish are wiped out, the next smaller fish species are targeted and so on. Of the major stocks globally, 10% have been over-fished or are recovering from over-fishing, 15-18% are known currently to be overexploited, while 47-50% are at their biological limits. The context of Indian waters (Arabian Sea / Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean) is of crucial importance globally, as the resource is being harvested in a manner that can be regarded as sustainable. However, this is likely to change as the fishing fleets head for these waters, once they have depleted stocks in other regions.

While the area is one of the few with untapped marine resource potential, it is also without doubt a region with one of the most poorly managed fisheries in the world, with illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities.

More and more people are competing for less and less fish and exacerbating the existing ocean crisis. Regulation of fishing vessels is universally inadequate. Worldwide, this kind of a fishing industry is often given access to fish stocks before the impact of their fishing practices is known.

Moreover, the fishing practices destroy habitat as well as inhabitants. Bottom trawling, for example, destroys entire ancient deep-sea coral forests. As impacts are felt throughout marine ecosystems, scientists are warning that the oceans will suffer profound changes as a result of over-fishing and destructive fishing practices.

Industrial Fishing Emptying Seas, <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/campaigns/save-our-seas/threats/fishing-the-life-from-our-ocea> [C.ELDOC1 .tsunami/TS1_fishing_the_life_from_ocean.html]

Ecological Impact of Tsunami

The tsunami tidal waves, which lashed the southern coasts on December 26, 2004 have impacted on the marine ecology, depleting fish stock in the seas off Vizhinjam in Thiruvananthapuram. However, the tidal surge has largely spared marine life in the near-shore areas of Kollam and Tamil Nadu, according to the preliminary findings of a survey carried out by the Department of Ocean Development (DOD).

The survey carried out by scientists aboard *Sagar Purvi*, a research vessel commissioned by DOD, led by Dr. C.S.P. Iyer, head of C- MARS, covered the Kerala and Tamil Nadu coasts, indicates that the tsunami has brought down the primary productivity of the sea at Vizhinjam, depleting plankton population and fish stock.

The team studied the dissolved oxygen content, turbidity and nutrient levels to detect changes in the productivity of the sea, which starts with phytoplankton or marine plants at the primary level.

Impact of Tsunami on Coastal Ecosystem

The tsunami-induced damage to coastal ecosystems was studied in four Nicobar Islands, viz. Camorta, Katchal, Nancowry and Trinkat. The extent of damages assessed ranged from 51 to 100% for mangrove ecosystems, 41 to 100% for coral reef ecosystems and 6.5 to 27% for forest ecosystems. The severity of damages and their consequences suggest the need for a definite ecology restoration programme.

Initial reports indicate that natural ecological systems such as coral reefs, mangroves and wetlands have suffered extensive damages. Physical damages might impact the structure and function of coastal ecosystems and their ability to sustain marine life and support livelihood of coastal communities.

The force of the tsunami destroys all structures that it comes in contact with, including settlements, boats, etc. thus resulting in excessive debris. This debris is then dumped on the coast by the action of the waves. Coastal dumping pollutes the coastal waters. This debris will slowly degrade and pollute the coastal waters and affect the active marine life inhabiting these waters. Such an effect will have long-lasting impact on the coastal ecosystems. Non-biodegradable waste such as plastics has contributed to a build-up in marine debris.

Chemical changes have included salt-water intrusion, eutrophication (enrichment) of the water resulting from increased run-off raw sewage and decomposition of flora and fauna, including unrecovered bodies. There will be slower decomposition of timber from mangroves, fishing boats and buildings. Coastal pollution will adversely affect the water quality and coastal marine life.

Mangroves, trees whose tangled roots grow above the ground in coastal swamps, are a unique habitat for wildlife like migratory birds, monkeys, lizards and turtles and contribute directly to rural livelihoods by providing forest products - timber, poles, fuel wood and thatch for houses - and indirectly by providing spawning grounds and nutrients for fish and shellfish. They are more effective than concrete barriers in reducing erosion, trapping sediments and dissipating the energy of breaking waves.

Recommendations for further action

Removal of mud and silt from reef areas, removal of debris and other materials from beaches and mangrove areas, afforestation of deforested areas, including mangroves and resettlement of coastal population in safer zones.

Considering the extent of damage, the need of the hour is to initiate restoration of coastal ecology through an Integrated Coastal Zone Management plan.

Ecological impact of tsunami on Nicobar Islands (Camorta, Katchal, Nancowry and Trinkat), S. Ramachandran and others, Institute for Ocean Management, Anna University, Chennai, India [C.ELDOC1.tsunami/ecological-impact-tsunami.pdf]

"The initial investigations will be followed up by microbiology tests to examine whether the tidal waves had resulted in the introduction of new species into the coastal waters. We have collected water samples from the coastal areas extending from Thottapally to the South. These samples will be analysed for any changes in water quality," Dr. Iyer said.

Decrease in nutrients

The study at Vizhinjam revealed that the presence of phytoplankton had declined by a factor of 100, as a result of the decrease in nutrients. This, according to the scientists, had affected the marine food chain, leading to a drop in fish catch.

There was no significant decrease in phytoplankton off the Tamil Nadu coast, and the fish stock was found largely intact. Bathymetric studies revealed a sudden drop in the depth of the sea at a distance of 10 to 15 km off the coast of Muttam.

The team inferred that this was caused by the removal of sediments during backwash, resulting in an exposure of the rock underneath.

Dr. Iyer said that the findings of the survey would be compared with the data generated by the Coastal Ocean Monitoring And Predictive Systems (COMAPS), an ongoing DOD project for periodic monitoring of the oceans.

Survey reveals tsunami impact on marine life at Vizhinjam, *T. Nandakumar*, The Hindu, Wednesday, Jan 19, 2005. <http://www.hindu.com/2005/01/19/stories/2005011916160300.htm>. [C.ELDOCI.tsunami/tsunami-impact.htm]

Restoring livelihoods and upgrading infrastructure

The response towards livelihood restoration emphasised the need to revive the local economy by restoring existing livelihoods and highlighted the urgent need to diversify people's income earning activities so as to spread the vulnerability arising from over-dependency on one major sector. To this end, a three-pronged strategy is being pursued.

Restoration of existing livelihoods, mainly fishery and agricultural, with due attention to the environmental sustainability of resuming such activities on the same scale as before.

There is No Alternative Employment: Tom Kocherry

I don't think there is any alternative employment brought forth anywhere. Embroidery, tailoring, etc. will be a side income. The fisherfolk cannot be cut out from fishing. If there is fish, they can use better technology for protecting it, like using ice etc. and even for drying fish.

But solar dryer is not a big solution. Solar dryer on a large scale is very expensive. And that will again centralise the income so a large number of women will be displaced.

Interview: Fr Thomas Kocherry, Priya C Nair & Shruti Kulkarni, Thiruvananthapuram, 27 April 2006. [C.ELDOC1.tsunami/interview-Tom-Kocherry.doc]

Fish Culturing as an Alternative

NGOs like the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, PREPARE, Bob-INGO, SIFFS and even the government are trying to bring subtle shifts in fishery occupations by encouraging fish culturing that includes activities like lobster and crab fattening, seaweed and ornamental fish culture etc.

These are all resource based opportunities that could be undertaken as supplementary and non-peak fishing employment, particularly suitable for women and the non-fishery community who work as fisher coolies, shell gatherers etc. In fact, pursuance of social equity objectives is better served through enabling fisher coolies diversifications into fish culturing rather than fish capture.

Activities like lobster & crab fattening can facilitate quantum jumps in the income of fish vendors, as seafood is sold by weight. These could be undertaken in the small or tiny scale production units or even as medium scale value added industries.

Mantra Aside, An Aid Gone Wrong Story? A Livelihood Sector Review, Rajan Alexander, Development Consultancy Group, Bangalore, March 2006.
[C.ELDOC1.0604/TS1-BuildBackBetterfinal1 .pdf]

Identification of non-fishery alternative employment/jobs focusing on future growth sectors (such as tourism, hotel industry, craft making, services such as driving, mechanics including fishery-related equipment repair).

Facilitating the revival of the local economy through strengthening the socio-economic infrastructure (access to state welfare board schemes through membership of trade unions, re-equipping and organizing into SHGs, credit access, revival of business development services).

In response to the need to provide alternative income generation activities in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, series of skills training programmes were launched by International Labour Organisation in Chennai, Kanchipuram, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Kanyakumari districts in Tamil Nadu in collaboration with local workers and employers organizations. Activities are commencing for Training of Trainers for business development skills, primarily through the methodology of start and improve your business. The skill-training has also been followed up with links to market linkages through trade unions and employers organisations.



Through these linkages, women beneficiaries are able to sell their products and are earning Rs. 30 to Rs. 50 a day. For many, this has been the only source of income, especially in the monsoon season when fishing could not take place, and for those who have opted not to pursue fishing as a livelihood option for various reasons.

Tsunami one year after - a joint UN report - India [C.ELDOC1.0602/TS1 -UN-Tsunami-Final.pdf]

Reviving Local Economy

The Joint Assessment Mission Report recommended, "Recovery will be more effective if it maximizes the use of locally available inputs (labor, materials, and services) so that it contributes to the recovery of the local economy...Cash for work programs used in areas such as rebuilding of houses and local infrastructure, soil recovery, reforestation of mangroves, etc. are a way of kick-starting the local economies." "The multiplier effect into the local economy will be vitally important in the longer run. Experience has shown that even in instances of reconstruction after a natural disaster, the more sustainable interventions have been those that draw on people's own skills, efforts and resources".

During the reconstruction phase, however it is building construction, followed by boat building and nets that could have given the local economy its maximum fillip. These turned to be largely, external, contractor driven operations. In the case of housing, workers were imported from within the district, within the state and some from as far away as Orissa and Gujarat. A leading Christian relief agency even justified this import on the grounds that these workers besides possessing house-building experience in major disaster settings were given "an opportunity to demonstrate solidarity!" Others splashed photos of imported workers in their documents as evidence of their contributions of cash-for-work employment on unsuspecting readers, passing them off as Tsunami victims! Such a scenario was relatively less true in the case of boats and nets. Initially, boats and nets were purchased outside the district but gradually some sanity was restored with many NGOs and donors changing track to train locals in boat building and production capacities.

Mantra Aside, An Aid Gone Wrong Story? A Livelihood Sector Review, Rajan Alexander, Development Consultancy Group, Bangalore, March 2006. [C.ELDOC1.0604/TS1-BuildBackBetterfinal1.pdf]

"A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise."

- The ICA Statement of Co-operative Identity [ISCI]

Cooperative Societies of Fisherfolk in Tamil Nadu

What ails the fishermen's cooperatives in the State? Why have they not been an effective vehicle for providing relief or speedily ensuring rehabilitation of the community that has been paralysed after the tsunami?

For fishermen, the word cooperative has an odour that is worse than rotten fish. Cooperatives have generally been used to exploit them. The main problem with most cooperatives is that they are government-run enterprises. They are created to meet targets, not to meet the needs of people. They are not peoples' organisations. They are envisaged largely for political parties to please their lower-level functionaries.

The Registrar of Cooperative Societies has more powers over cooperatives than the Registrar of Companies has over companies. The loans given for the repair of boats will not be repaid. A fishery cooperative cannot work successfully unless credit is linked to marketing. There are no serious cooperative initiatives for marketing fish in Tamil Nadu. The SIFFS cooperative is an exception. It works well, particularly in Kerala and Kanyakumari because it is run by fisherfolk.

Objectives of Cooperative Society

- * *Render service rather than making profit*
- * *Mutual help instead of competition*
- * *Self help instead of dependence*

Reviving Cooperative Credit Institutions, M S Sriram, Business Studies, <http://www.nos.org/Secbuscour/cc09.pdf#search=%22cooperative%20society%20business%20studies%22> [C.ELDOCI.tsunami/Cooperative-credit.html]

Fisheries Co-operatives in Tamil Nadu

As on 31.3.2004, there are 808 Marine Fishermen / Fisherwomen Co-operative Societies with 4,15,448 members, 346 Inland Fishermen / Fisherwomen Co-operative Societies with 68,220 members, 21 other types of Cooperative Societies with 5176 members, 11 District Fishermen Co-operative Federation and one State Federation are functioning in Tamil Nadu.

Demand No.7, Fisheries Department Policy Note 2005-2006, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department <http://www.tn.gov.in/policynotes/fisheries-1.htm>

Outstanding Features of Cooperatives

- * They are formed by the members on their free will
- * Members join and leave their co-operative on their free will
- * They are managed democratically by the members themselves in accordance with the principles of co-operation believing in the concept of 'One-Member One-Vote'
- * Co-operatives protect the interests of their members. Members' liability remains restricted only to the extent of their contributed shares
- * They are free to take their own decisions including the freedom to expand, reduce and dissolve their own institution
- * They are autonomous and are not directed, guided or controlled by the State
They have the capacity and advantage of making use of the State facilities without subordinating themselves to the State
- * They are free to develop their own linkages with private and co-operative agencies which help achieve and promote their social and economic aspirations
- * They take care of the community, women and youth.

Principles of Co-operation

- i *Voluntary and open membership*
- ii *Democratic member control*
- iii *Member economic participation*
- iv *Autonomy and independence*
- v *Education, training and information*
- vi *Co-operation among co-operatives*
- vii *Concern for the community*

Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Cooperative Society Act 1995

The Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act of 1995 broke new ground in the history of the Indian cooperative movement. This is a cooperative law, which respects the right of members to fully own and control their own cooperative enterprise. The enactment, an act of political courage and wisdom by the Andhra Pradesh Government, was the final step in a long effort to create a new legislative environment for cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh.

http://www.microfinancegateway.org/fjles/24919_file_law_India_04.pdf
[C.ELDOC1.tsunami/co-operative-andhra.pdf]

Fisherfolk can be part of a single cooperative

Fisherfolk can belong to only one cooperative and there should not be duplication of cooperatives. Every fisherman should be a member to get maximum benefit. Loan and credit facility should be available and the fish should be sold in an auction. It has to be a complete membership based cooperative so that everybody's needs are looked after.

Interview: Fr Thomas Kocherry, Priya C Nair & Shruti Kulkarni, Thiruvananthapuram, 27 April 2006.
[C.ELDOC1.tsunami/interview-Tom-Kocherry.doc]

Fishers' Cooperatives

Most of the cooperatives have adopted the agrarian rationality, which is not readily applicable to fisheries.

In fisheries, the commodity is crucial and has to be sold immediately. Intervention at the first sale point is crucial. Cooperatives need to get control of the first transaction as soon as the fish lands on shore. This will result in better prices for fishermen. Out of Rs. 100 paid for fish by the consumer on the east coast of TamilNadu, the fisherman probably gets only about Rs.20.

By cooperative intervention at the beach price, the price that the fisherman commands can easily go up to Rs.40-50. That is the kind of difference that a very minor intervention can make. All it requires is for fishermen to appoint someone to ensure that the catch is auctioned transparently. It requires transparent dealing, greater competition and a mechanism to collect the money from the merchants. Credit is safer for such cooperatives because loan repayments can be adjusted against the fish sales made by members. Credit can be used for buying assets, which can help in increasing productivity, which results in better incomes, leading to a better quality of life.

The Need for Cooperative Societies in the Fishing Sector

There is a great need for small producers, whatever be the produce, to organize themselves on cooperative lines to get economies of scale and to survive in the global market.

In the fisheries sector globalisation started much earlier when compared to other sectors. For instance the arrival of new products like nylon rolls and nylon lines. Coming of the Norwegian Mustard hooks, made the hook and line fishing very productive.

However the kind of global trends that we are talking about, the need for fishermen's organization and collectives, cooperative action is increasingly becoming important. The SIFFS societies have been able to access globally produced inputs like outboard motors at reasonable price only because of coming together and having economies of scale. And we also know very well the kind of exploitation by middlemen, merchants and moneylenders. All of this can be reduced or avoided if fishermen come together and organize their own economic activities. So there is a great deal of utility in promoting cooperatives and cooperative action among the fishermen and the fishing communities.

Unfortunately the state cooperative, the state sponsored cooperative programmes in marine fisheries have been a dismal failure. Neither of these cooperatives is actually controlled by the fishermen nor do they have any business activity, which is the whole purpose of a cooperative. They don't do any business. They are only meant for the state to provide certain subsidised inputs, certain welfare schemes, maybe insurance for the fishing communities. They are only quasi government entities. So genuine cooperatives need to be formed if we want the fishing communities to have the advantages of the economies of scale and survive in the global market.

Interview: V.Vivekanandan, SIFFS, Priya C Nair & Shruti Kulkarni, Thiruvananthapuram, 27 April 2006.[C.ELDOC1.tsunami/interview-Vivekanandan.doc]

For Self Reliant Co Operative: Recommendations by SIPA

The State Government is requested to give new life to the Co-operatives and consider making the Fishery Co-operatives as self-reliant institutions, when the members (both men and women) could take care of its functioning as the co-operatives take care of their well-being - with timely credit, collective investment on processing and transportation offish, etc.

Self-reliant co-operatives on the lines of Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Co-operatives Societies (APMACS) Act and based on the Model Act of Govt of India could restore the superceded rights and the responsibilities to the members. Thrift co-operative society could very much perform the task of micro-finance / credit institution and provide timely credit for fish vending and such other occasions besides providing loan assistance to members in need and during non-seasons.

There is a great scope for the cooperative societies to get back their past glory when the state government is able to come-up with necessary legislations for self-reliant co-operatives (as a parallel Act to the existing ones) and facilitate its functioning in most of the Tsunami affected coastal villages. Supporting NGOs could play the role of facilitators and the SHGs could also get integrated with such people centered cooperatives on its maturity.

Recommendations of the Study on " Livelihood Restoration and Support Services" - South Indian Producers Association, Chennai. [C.ELDOC1.tsunami/recommendation of the study on livelihood.doc]

Self Help Groups

Micro financing is considered as one of the effective ways in the restoration of livelihood to marginal and vulnerable sections affected by tsunami. The main concept of the revolving fund is to provide subsidy for the self-help groups with the rate of interest of 8.5 to 9.0 %. The purpose of the revolving fund is to

- a) strengthen the group
- b) purchase of raw materials and marketing
- c) infrastructure support for marketing activities
- d) internal lending to individual members
- e) inculcate the habit of repayment of loans

732 SHGs are functioning effectively in the coastal areas, where 503 SHGs are started after tsunami. Totally, 13, 316 members are involved in self-help group activities effectively. The district administration has provided the sum of Rs. 64.80 lakhs for 648 groups (478 groups SGSY, 25 groups RSVY (urban), 145 groups donors (urban) and NGO's are supporting 84 SHGs with the sum of Rs. 17.50 lakhs.

Indra's Throne

Women in Bihar have pioneered fish - breeding cooperatives in the face of stiff resistance from powerful male lobbies Adithi, an NGO working in Bihar facilitates a women-in- inland fisheries programme primarily in Andhrathari block, Madhubani district. Here, all the traditional fisher women of the block have been organised into groups and for the first time in Bihar (maybe in the country), ponds have been allotted to them.

Indra's Throne, Viji Srinivasan, Humanscape, Feb 02, 1996. [C.ELDOC1.A35/a35-B1021.pdf]

The major activities carried out by these SHGs in tsunami affected areas are fish trading, grocery shops, vegetable cultivation, sanitary napkin preparation, bakery, tailoring, masonry work. The members of the SHGs were given skill training with the support of government, NGO's and corporate bodies. Some of the trainings organised for the SHGs are auto rickshaw operation, tailoring training, catering technology, solar fish drying technology, mason training, bakery production, fish pickle production, flattening of crabs/lobsters, computer training, paper cup manufacturing, candle making and toy making.

Success stories: Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation-Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu [C.ELDOC1.tsunami/cuddalore-rehab.pdf]

Alternative Livelihood Structures

The Producers Company

The Producers Company is the ideal legal structure for a proposed trading organisation.

The Producer Company Act (a shorthand to describe the amendment to the Companies Act) now enables the registration of a company with cooperative principles. It is thus a hybrid of a Company and a Cooperative.

The highlights of a Producer Company are :

- * Only primary producers can become shareholders in this company
- * It is a member controlled company
- * There is complete accountability to the members
- * Either individuals or producer groups can become shareholders
- * One member one vote, irrespective of shareholding
- * Shares cannot be publicly traded and hence there is no danger of the company taken over by non-producers
- * An elected Board of Directors will manage the company on behalf of the members
- * A full-time paid Chief Executive will be in-charge of the day-to-day management of the company's affairs

The benefits that can accrue to the members of this company are:

- * Fair price for the produce supplied to the company (which can be finalised by the member elected Board of Directors)
- * Profit of the company can be ploughed back to the members in the form of a withheld price for the quantity of produce supplied
- * A patronage bonus can be paid to the members based on the transactions they undertook with the company
- * A limited return on the capital invested by the members in the company

In order to set up a company under this section we would need any 10 individual producers or a minimum of two producer groups. The board of members has to be elected by the first AGM, which must be held within 90 days after the company has been registered. This board needs to then elect a full time Chief Executive who cannot be a member of the company. Membership is by invitation and the liability of members will be limited. There could be a limit on the possible number of shares that each member can own. The number of shares does not define the number of votes. Though the company will operate on a one-person one-vote policy the articles could give extra voting rights to members based on their participation. Participation again could be defined by the articles since the act itself does not define it.

Report of Just Change Workshop, Mysore, Oct 21-23, 2004. <http://www.justchangeindia.com/Links/Mysore%20Workshop%20report.pdf> [C.ELDOCl.tsunami/workshop-report-producergroup.pdf]

Bringing Together Producers and Consumers 'Just Change' Shows the Way

Just Change seeks to create a new and alternative trade structure that will bring together two ends of the market spectrum - producers and consumers - to work as members of a co-operative. By sharing the ownership of the market chain, by spreading the risk along the chain and by exercising choice over whom they sell to and from whom they buy, both consumers and producers can gain greater control in the market economy.

Producers can retain ownership over their product all along the market chain and can therefore benefit from the final retail value of the product. Consumers can work directly with producers to establish a price for the product that is based on principles of equity rather than fluctuating and speculative markets. They will also have the power to collectively determine the distribution of surplus.

Just Change recognises that it is impossible to plug all the leaks and to build a purely local economy that is sustainable in the long run. Instead Just Change seeks to directly link different local economies of producers and consumers to ensure that as much money as possible flows between these economies thus strengthening them. We believe that such a linkage will generate more economic activities for example, tea from the adivasis in Gudalur could result in a packaging and retailing business in Orissa.

Trading between communities could become an innovative vehicle for community development. If communities across the globe could link up to trade directly with each other they could form a social chain, which could be a powerful force for economic, social and political change. Such a chain would revitalise communities rather than destroy them.

<http://www.justchangeindia.com/frames.asp?file=concept.htm&head=Concept>
[C.ELD0C1.tsunami/TTS1Just_change_producer_consumer.html]

The Blessing of the Commons

In many developing nations, governments are only now moving from the development mode to the management mode with regard to the living resources of the oceans. The assumption that the decentralised, small-scale, community-based coastal fishing activities were on their way out, and would be replaced by centralised, large-scale firms, has been belied. These realities have resulted in the growing interest by states to 'look back into the future', particularly with regard to local-level institutional arrangements, towards more decentralised governance by the devolution of representative democracy towards the village level.

Village communities are being given the rights to restore, use, and protect natural resources. This trend is providing strong incentives for rural households to devise arrangements for collective management of the resources. The state must now stand by - but not wither away. For state support is needed to ensure that benefits from the local commons are not expropriated by the more powerful in the locale and the community.

Restoring community rights to coastal resources does not necessarily lead to proper management for several reasons. These include disagreements among those who hold the rights over how the resources are to be used; corrupt practices in their use; and a lack of understanding of the ways to restore degraded ecosystem. In this context, the role of non-governmental organisations as well as the state attains significance.

Reviving ecologically sophisticated fishing technologies is a pre-requisite for reviving the perspective of living resources of the seas as natural assets. This is possible only when the harvests made using such equipment are backed by effective demand from the consumers. It was international demand for large quantities of shrimp, for example, that led to the widespread introduction of bottom trawlers in Asian tropical waters. It will now require new international demand for shrimp that does not harm the tropical ecosystem to help revive the passive, selective, and eco-friendly nets once widely used by small-scale fishing communities.

More recently, there has been increasing concern about sustainable fishing and the need to address the issue of persistent poverty in coastal communities. These interrelated themes can dovetail well to pressure national agencies to support the presently fragmented initiatives to combine the synergy of coastal communities for reclaiming their rights to the living natural assets of the sea. National political commitment is a necessary condition for the ripples of micro-local actions to coalesce into a sea change in ecological and socio-economic circumstances. This will help restore the blessing of the commons: the ecological integrity of the coastal seas, livelihood based on the sustainable use of living natural resources, and true community wellbeing.

The Blessing of the commons : Small-Scale Fisheries, Community Property Rights, and Coastal Natural Assets, John Kurien, August 2003. [C.ELDOCI.tsunami/fisheries-propertyrights.pdf]

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'Net-Working' Together

[TAMIL, 38 mins 7 sees, PAL-VCD-Colour]

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A film on the livelihoods of the coastal communities and their fight against the global-market hegemony

Boats, boats everywhere but not a fish to catch! This may only be partly true about the fast depleting sea resources. But several NGOs and other organisations have already begun talking about diversification and alternative employment for the fishing community. The threat from globalisation is another cause for worry. Several big companies have already sneaked in the traditional fishermen's "holy" space. The local market is constantly being attacked by the big companies and the global market. One way to sustain is through forming cooperatives controlled by the members. A group of women in Rajakamangalamthurai have formed such a sangha. They have



Available in CED

Film

Our Coast Our Right - Tamil 54 mins, PAL VCD Colour

A film explaining the Coastal Regulation Zone and the economics and politics of its implementation from the point of view of local community rights

Booklets

Our Coast Our Right (English and Tamil) - A Background on Coastal Regulation Zone and Tsunami

Docpost Habitat and Docpost Disaster (English and Tamil)

A monthly compilation of clippings from newspapers, magazines, newsletters and journals on issues relating to habitat and disaster.

Introductory note on NREGA (English and Tamil)

A brief about the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, its implementation and significance in disaster response.

Posters (Tamil)

A set of three posters on **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act**

A poster on the **Right to Information Act**

pooled in their resources and are vending fish collectively. Although they started it through NGO intervention they are now functioning more or less autonomously. The strength that comes from working together, as a group has paid its dividends. These women are now part of a larger network that will only grow bigger and stronger with time. Few men from this village have also followed suite.

Most fishermen say they only know fishing yet there are a few willing to explore opportunities beyond fishing. So, how easy or difficult is the reconstruction of their livelihood? On one hand, the traditional economy is finding it difficult to sustain in the new globalised market. One is tempted to look for a "niche" market or "niche" products and services. However, most of these are divorced from the local economy, local needs and generally need subsidised marketing efforts and NGO intervention to barely survive.

The old economy has a room for all but their market is dying. So some amount of modernization is required...from packaging to use of computers, better technology and even better marketing. The solution would probably be to make the local economy self-sustainable and ensure its continual growth. How can the NGOs and the local people take up this mammoth task of keeping the traditional economy alive and growing? Find out in "**Net-working together**".

The aim of the film is to educate the local communities. It is part of a series of AV material on Tsunami related issues. The film is accompanied by an information booklet in Tamil and provides references to other information. The main aim is to promote the right to information and people's right to know, determine and participate in their own development particularly reconstruction of their livelihood and their re-development and rehabilitation.

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