

Title:

**Self help groups working in the fisheries sector: Tamil Nadu****Translated from Tamil: Navin Sigamony**

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Kanyakumari District  
Kodimunai Village

Women's SHGs here obtain juvenile lobsters and rear them till they attain full size. They get technical inputs from the Fisheries College at Tuticorin. Once the lobsters are fully grown, they fetch a price of anywhere between INR400 and INR700 per kilogram.

With help from the local government bodies, a farm with eight tanks has been set up at a cost of INR104,000. Of this, the SHG contributed INR26,000. In the first year itself, the SHG made profits in excess of INR25000 per month.

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Nagapattinam District  
Seerkazhi Division

Women of the fisher folk started SHGs. After an initial slow phase, they were motivated by bank and government officials. The women learnt to read and write and maintain accounts. Each SHG was given a revolving fund of INR25,000. This enabled them to buy more fish for resale. Based on their performance, they were then given an additional loan of INR 50,000, which included a subsidy. After discussion with the SHGs, it was decided that this would be repaid at the rate of INR1000 per month.

Now the SHGs participate in a big way in the fish auctions. Grading of fish by the SHGs according to size and quality helps them get a better price.

Right now, there is only a shed from which they function. Even the ice boxes they use have to be rented. Although the SHGs are doing very well, much is needed in the form of infrastructural support. Deep freeze facilities as well as proper facilities for salting and drying fish are needed. At present, the salting and drying is done on sack cloths spread on the sand.

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Ramanathapuram District  
Mandapam Division  
Francis Nagar

The Francis Nagar SHG was formed by women who wanted to get out of their dependence on moneylenders. Now they have a common fund of INR53,000 out of which loans are given to members if they have any urgent requirements. The SHG has got a loan of INR30,000,000, which includes a subsidy of INR125,00. This loan has gone towards setting up a unit where fishing nets are made by hand. Handmade nets are more durable and stronger than machine-

made ones, and each one can be sold for as much as INR18,000. The unit helps each of its members make profits in excess of INR2000 every month.

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Ottapidaram Division  
Keezha Arasadi Village

A crab-rearing facility at a cost of INR500,000 and an auction centre at a cost of INR1,000,000 have been built by the district authorities.

The 4000 odd people of Keezha Arasadi are fisher folk, and crabs form a major part of their catch. A lot of juvenile crabs are part of the catch, and these, known as "kazhi nandu" (waste crabs), do not fetch more than INR50 or 60 per kilogram. The fully grown crabs fetch between INR350 and 400 per kilogram.

Five women's SHGs are functioning here and their main activity is acquiring the small crabs and rearing them in the facility till they are fully grown. This is done with inputs from the Suganthi Devanesan Ocean Research Centre of the Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. The SHGs gather food for the crabs from the seaside, thus saving the cost of feed.

The SHGs are:

Name of SHG	No. of Members	Subsidy(INR)	Loan(INR)	Total(INR)
Sarojini Women's Union, Vellappatti	18	112,500	112,500	225,000
Kadhiroli Women's Union, Vellappatti	12	75,000	75,000	150,000
Arulosai Women's Union, Vellappatti	17	106,250	106,250	212,500
Vennila Women's Union, Vellappatti	16	124,960	124,960	249,920
Adhisayam Women's Union, Vellappatti	16	124,960	124,960	249,920
Total	79	543,670	543,670	1,087,340