

# WIF India Workshop Report

## Enhancing Women's Roles in Fisheries in India



1-3 February 2010  
YUVA Centre, Navi Mumbai, India



**International Collective in Support of Fishworkers**  
[www.icsf.net](http://www.icsf.net)



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Enhancing Women's Roles  
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Chandrika Sharma  
for International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)  
27 College Road, Chennai 600 006, India  
Email: [icsf@icsf.net](mailto:icsf@icsf.net) Website: <http://www.icsf.net>

**Edited by**  
KG Kumar

**Designed by**  
P. Sivasakthivel

**Cover photo by**  
Venkatesh Salagrama/ICM  
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DHARMESH SHAH/CSF

Fish vendor in an animated conversation at the Visakhapatnam fishing harbour, Andhra Pradesh

# List of Abbreviations

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APTFU	Andhra Pradesh Traditional Fishworkers Union	MFRMA	Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009
BPL	below poverty line	MIDC	Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation
CFVU	Coastal Fish Vendors Union	MMG	Matsya Mitra Groups
CMFRI	Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute	MMKS	Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti
CRZ	coastal regulation zone	MVS	model fishermen village
CZM	coastal zone management	MZI	maritime zones of India
CZMP	coastal zone management plan	NASVI	National Alliance of Street Vendors of India
DFWA	District Fishermen's Welfare Association	NEAA	National Environmental Appellate Authority
ECR	east coast road	NFF	National Fishworkers' Forum
EEZ	exclusive economic zone	NGO	non-governmental organization
FRP	fibre-reinforced plastic	OBM	outboard motor
GAIS	Group Accident Insurance Scheme	OTFWU	Orissa Traditional Fish Workers' Union
GDP	gross domestic product	SC/ST	Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe
GoI	Government of India	SCR	saving-cum-relief
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers	SEWA	Self-employed Women's Association
JNNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission	SHG	self-help group
KFDC	Karnataka Fisheries Development Corporation	SNIRD	Society for National Integration through Rural Development
MACS	mutually aided co-operative societies	SNVF	Stree Niketan Vanitha Federation
MACTS	mutually aided co-operative thrift societies	TDFF	Trivandrum District Fishermen's Federation
MASS	Macchimar Adhikar Sahas Samiti	TVC	town vending committee





AARTHI SRIDHAR

Women dry fish vendors, Sandakhuda,  
Paradeep, Orissa

# Preface

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The workshop titled “Enhancing Women’s Roles in Fisheries in India”, held from 1 to 3 February 2010 in Mumbai, was aimed at discussing and analyzing the role of women in fisheries, and reflecting on issues facing women in fishing communities and organizations in India today. It was also meant to create awareness about present key policies that are relevant to women in fishing communities, and to discuss ways of enhancing the capacity of women fishworkers to participate in, and influence, decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihoods.

The three-day residential workshop had a total of 55 participants, representing about 20 organizations and unions, from all nine coastal States/Union Territories, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The participants ranged from women directly engaged in processing, vending and trading fish, organized as part of associations, unions, co-operatives, societies, self-help groups (SHGs), and so on, to representatives of support non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A majority of the participants were women, though some

men representing unions and NGOs also participated.

The workshop was structured to facilitate active interaction and discussion among the participants, taking into account the language diversity of the group, which represented nine spoken languages. On all days, time was provided for participants to discuss issues within their own language groups and to provide comments on the matter being discussed. Relevant documents, such as State schemes, were translated into local languages. Resource persons in the field of fisheries and labour and women’s rights provided information and stimulated debate on issues critical for women in fisheries.

The workshop not only exposed the participants to women’s issues and organizational strategies in different parts of the country, and to policies, schemes and legislation of current relevance to fishing communities, but also stimulated discussions and exchange of views. It helped participants explore their vision of a fisheries that sustains both communities and livelihoods. It also strengthened linkages between groups, and helped them search for strategies to protect the spaces and livelihoods of women in fisheries. ❧





DHARMESH SHAH/ICSF

Member of Malpe Fisherwomen's Co-operative Society, drying fish, Malpe, Karnataka



# Introduction

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## Background and Rationale

Women play critical roles in fisheries in India, particularly in the pre- and post-harvest sector. In the marine sector, according to the Marine Fisheries Census, 2005, of the 756,391 fisherfolk involved in fishing and allied activities, 365,463 are women. There are 152,692 women engaged in marketing of fish, as against 54,670 men, which indicates that women predominate in fish marketing. Similar data is, unfortunately, not available for inland fisheries, though the picture is likely to be similar, with women dominating marketing and processing activities. Women are also known to engage, to a lesser extent, in fish harvesting, primarily in inshore waters, and often for consumption purposes.

In fishing communities, the household often functions as an economic unit, and the roles of men and women tend to be complementary, with women controlling land-based activities, such as net weaving, and processing and marketing of fish, while men engage in fish harvesting. At the same time, women remain responsible for sustaining the fishing household, and maintaining community networks and support structures.

Developments in fisheries and technology have led to a change in the division of labour and the nature of work undertaken by women, which has implications for gender relations. For example, machine-made nets have almost completely displaced the handwoven nets made by women, as happened not too long ago in the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. Centralized bulk landings of fish, by

trawlers, for instance, have made it difficult for women to retain their vital roles in fish processing and marketing, since economically powerful, often export-oriented, interests with more capital have entered the scene. In many situations, only smaller fish or 'trash' fish is available for women. In addition, the greater competition for fish through efficient and advanced technology, has increased the pressure on fish resources, affecting local livelihoods.

While some women have adapted to the changed situation, turning it to their economic advantage, other women have found it much more difficult to cope as they find themselves being eased out of the fisheries, or forced to continue at meagre profit levels or as low-paid wage labour, with limited or no access to social security or decent conditions of work. This has had implications for their economic status within the household, and on their status within the community and society, in general.

Industrial and infrastructural developments, often outside the fisheries, have also had major implications for women. Such developments include unregulated activities in the coastal zone that threaten to take over the spaces traditionally occupied and used by fishing communities, while destroying resources; trade patterns that bring few benefits to small-scale communities, while making their livelihoods more vulnerable; and models of aquaculture that impose high social, environmental and economic costs on communities.

At the same time, there is a growing awareness of the potential impact of climate change on fishing communities



and livelihoods, and the need to develop responses to this phenomenon, while challenging the externally formulated strategies prescribed to deal with climate change, which have implications for fishing-community livelihoods.

Clearly, there is need to focus on the issues women face, both as workers in the fisheries and as members of fishing communities. In this context, the organizational initiatives of women themselves ought to be recognized. Women have organized for example, as co-operatives and SHGs, to defend their economic interests. They have also rallied politically around issues such as the need for transport, market facilities, access to fish, social security, and so on. They have highlighted the concerns that affect them as members responsible for the wellbeing of their communities—relating to health, sanitation, education, displacement, pollution and climate change, among others.

### Objectives

It was against this backdrop that International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) organized the workshop titled “Enhancing Women’s Roles in Fisheries in India” from 1 to 3 February 2010, in Mumbai, India. The workshop was meant to:

- reflect on issues facing women of fishing communities, as workers and as members of fishing communities and organizations;
- share local agendas and strategies of women organizing in fisheries, taking stock of achievements and obstacles;
- discuss and create awareness about key policies and interventions of relevance to women in fishing communities; and
- enhance the capacity of women fishworkers to participate in, and influence, decision-making processes affecting their lives and livelihoods.

### Preparatory work

The following preparatory work was undertaken:

- A publication, titled “Women Fish Vendors in India: An Information Booklet”, was prepared, which contained information on some government policies and other initiatives that have been undertaken, or are being undertaken, which have a bearing on the livelihoods and conditions of work of women fishworkers. The booklet compiles some of the fisheries-specific schemes and initiatives undertaken by central and State departments, as well as by central research institutions and intergovernmental organizations. It also examines, from the perspective of women fishworkers, the provisions of the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors and its implications for fish vendors, as well as the Unorganized Workers’ Social Security Act 2008.
- A study to document some key issues facing women of fishing communities, as well as important organizational initiatives taken up by them, was undertaken to facilitate discussions at the workshop.

### Content and methodology

The workshop focused on the following:

- A sharing of experiences and strategies by participants who had divergent backgrounds and experiences
- In-depth discussions on some of the key issues identified by the participants, as well as discussions on strategies
- Discussions on (i) fisheries-specific schemes and initiatives undertaken by central and State departments, as well as by central research institutions and intergovernmental organizations; (ii) provisions of the National Policy on Urban Street

Vendors and the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act 2008, and its relevance for women fishworkers, and (iii) issues related to the implementation of the 1991 Coastal Regulation Zone Notification and the draft Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009

The workshop was structured to facilitate active interaction and discussion among participants. Taking into account the language diversity of the group (which represented nine languages), the technique of 'whisper translation' was followed, with time provided for translation after every couple of sentences. On all days, time was provided for participants to discuss in their own language groups and to provide comments on the issue being discussed. The presentations were kept simple and direct, bearing in mind the nature of the group. Some relevant

documents (such as State schemes) were translated into local languages. Print copies of all schemes, policies and legislation discussed were provided to participants in the form of a booklet.

## **Participants**

The workshop invited 55 participants from women's organizations, fishworker organizations, co-operatives and NGOs from all the coastal States of India, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The participants ranged from women directly engaged in processing, vending and trading fish, organized as part of associations, unions, co-operatives, societies, SHGs, and so on, to representatives of support NGOs. A majority of the participants were women, though some men representing unions and NTGOs also participated. 3





RAMYA/ICSF

Participants from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, during the inagural session of the workshop

# Report of the Workshop

## Introduction and Welcome

The three-day workshop started with Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary, ICSF, welcoming the participants. She pointed to the rich experience represented in the room, given that several participants were themselves fish traders, vendors and processors, while others were part of organizations that had worked to defend the interests of women fishworkers for long. She thanked, in particular, the fish vendors and processors for taking time off from their work to be at the workshop.

An important objective of the workshop, Chandrika Sharma said, was to learn from one another, to share success stories and experiences of organizing, and to understand what each participant should, or could, do in her own context to protect her livelihood. The workshop would seek to explore ways to achieve a model of fisheries development that protects both women's livelihoods and the sustainability of resources.

Noting the language diversity in the room, Chandrika Sharma stressed the importance of going slow, to allow for translations and a healthy exchange of experience and views among all participants. After this introduction, participants were given a detailed description of the workshop agenda, and how the coming days would be organized.

### Self-introduction by participants in groups

After the introductory session, participants were split into three

State-wise groups. Each participant provided an introduction to the work being done by her organization, the issues they were working on, and the way they had organized around their interests. Breaking out into groups ensured that each participant had enough time to share her experiences in detail, which was important, given the linguistic diversity of the groups and the relatively large number of participants.

The sharing in groups was very useful in terms of setting out the issues and concerns of participants. Through this session the participants also realized that concerns were very similar across States. This served as an effective icebreaker as participants began to relate to one another through common issues.

In the session that reported back from the groups, key issues facing women fishworkers along the coast were synthesized. The problems identified included poor market facilities and lack of access to credit; poor access to education, health and sanitation; and displacement and pollution. This session also helped list the various strategies that are being used by women fishworkers to safeguard their interests, such as getting better organized, networking with other groups, organizing protests and demonstrations, seeking alternative employment, and so on. 3



RAMYA/ICSF



Groups from Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal exchanging information on the various issues faced by women fishworkers

RAMYA/ICSF



Participants from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka discussing the different organizational initiatives undertaken to improve lives and livelihoods of women fishworkers

## Group Sessions

### Group 1: Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal

*Orissa Traditional Fish Workers Union (OTFWU), Orissa*

The OTFWU works in all six coastal districts of Orissa—Ganjam, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak and Baleswar. The OTFWU represents small-scale fishing communities. An important priority for the organization is protecting the rights of women in the fisheries sector. There has been a specific focus on improving facilities in markets where women sell fish. An example is the *Humma haat* dry-fish market in Ganjam district, one of the most important dry-fish markets in the State. Until recently, the market had no basic facilities like toilets, electricity, shelter and storage sheds. There was no security, and vendors and sellers were at risk of having their goods stolen. After a lot of pressure from the union, a storage shed has now been created. Electricity has been provided, and four toilets have been constructed. Policemen have been posted for security. To prevent women dry-fish vendors/traders from being cheated by merchants, weighing machines are checked for accuracy, and proper receipts are made out. The union has demanded a clear demarcation of the market area.

The union is also fighting for better facilities in other smaller markets across the State that suffer from similar problems. Another initiative of the union is the display of prices of fish in different markets (such as Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai), so that the fish producer and processor groups can bargain for fair prices. Contacts with different markets have been established, enabling producer and processor groups

to create direct marketing linkages and obtain better prices.

*Society for National Integration through Rural Development (SNIRD), Andhra Pradesh*

SNIRD is based in Ongole and works with small-scale fishing communities in Nellore, Prakasam and Guntur districts. SNIRD has been instrumental in facilitating the formation of a union of small-scale fishworkers. The union currently has a membership of 18,500, of which 3,000 are women who sell fish. The union has struggled for the rights of fishing communities, and has met with some success. The union also provides support to its members. For example, it provides Rs5,000 to the family on the death of a fisherman.

SNIRD works with the small-scale sector—those who fish using catamarans, and now fibre-reinforced plastic (FRP) boats and outboard motors (OBMs)—helping them keep track of developments in the sector. With the increasing costs of OBMs, boats and nets, middlemen have become more important for providing credit and advances. As such, loans are given on the condition that all high-value fish is provided only to the middlemen. In effect, women's access to fish has declined and only low-value and 'trash' fish is now accessible to them.

SNIRD has worked to federate SHGs of fisherwomen, leading to the formation of mutually aided co-operative thrift societies (MACTS). These help promote savings and access to credit. The societies have also helped facilitate access to government schemes, and have helped children go to school. Night schools are also run by the societies.



Women vendors in the area face various kinds of problems. Many people object to fisherwomen selling fish in their localities, given the 'smelly' nature of the commodity they deal with. Through the union, the women have demanded the allocation of fixed spots from where they can sell their fish; in some *taluks*, such areas have been demarcated.

The constant violations of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification—to make way for industrial and other developments—are affecting the women in fishing communities. They are being displaced from their lands and houses, and they are fighting against such displacements.

*District Fishermen's Welfare Association (DFWA), Andhra Pradesh*

The two women from this organization who were at the workshop—Kasamma and Masenaamma—were fish vendors from Gangavaram village. They said that the association has a women's wing with about 55 members. Members meet every month to discuss issues such as fish trade and education of their children. Using some seed money they received, they also run a savings and credit programme. About five years ago, through the DFWA, a solar dryer was set up in Gangavaram, to promote hygienic fish processing. However, the quantity of fish being processed is lower than the installed capacity of the dryer. This year, with the support of the Greater Municipal Corporation, Visakhapatnam, training is being imparted to 350 women processors.

Kasamma and Masenaamma complained about the unhygienic conditions in the markets they frequented, including those in Orissa. Kasamma also spoke about the problems faced by her community as a result of the construction of the Gangavaram port, which affected fishing communities in four villages, cutting off their access to the sea and to the coastal lands traditionally used

by them. These villages have been opposing the development of the port since the beginning. An agreement was hammered out whereby the government agreed to provide compensation to displaced families as well as one job for each of the 3,600 families displaced. The fishing communities also demanded the construction of a jetty for their use, to enable them to continue fishing.

Their demand for construction of a jetty for landing their fish in the port is, however, yet to be conceded. While a total of 2,826 fishermen families have received financial compensation, the remaining are yet to be compensated, and their livelihoods yet to be restored. Women have not got any compensation until now, though they are expecting a financial package in the coming months. The job package to provide employment to 300 fishermen in the port has been delayed due to political problems. All political parties are trying to capitalize on this issue, said Kasamma, leaving the fishing community itself divided and greatly weakened. Nonetheless, the port was inaugurated in July 2009, even as the fishing communities continued their struggle against it.

*Andhra Pradesh Traditional Fishworkers' Union (APTFU)*

Lakshmi from the APTFU said that the union was formed in 1999 and was affiliated to the National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF). The union works in four districts—Srikakulam, Vijaynagar, Vishakapatnam and East Godavari. The union has supported the formation of about 32 MACS for women, each of which has around 50 to 400 members. Women save Rs50 each month, which they put into the society, from which they can take loans. They have resisted the formation of SHGs, as the requirement of 20 members per SHG could prove divisive for the union and the societies.

The union has worked to enhance access to government schemes, such

as the saving-cum-relief schemes. The union feels that the scheme should be extended to fisherwomen, as in other States like Tamil Nadu. The union is also seeking identity cards for women fishworkers, as well as an insurance cover for all fish vendors. The union has helped women's societies to access schemes that provide women with battery-operated bikes to be used for transporting fish. The societies have already received the bikes. They are now trying to organize training programmes to teach women how to operate bikes, and to request additional batteries.

On the issue of selling and trading fish, the union has demanded the rationalization of the taxes that are paid by vendors at markets and elsewhere.

In the face of rapid industrial development along the coast—exemplified by the thermal plant at Srikakulam and a number of ports—the union has demanded the strict implementation of the CRZ Notification and the reservation of the 0-500-m zone for fishing communities.

*Coastal Fish Vendors Union (CFVU), East Midnapore, West Bengal*

Kajal Bar of CFVU, which has around 350 women members, in the East Midnapore district, said that the union is affiliated to the NFF. Women fish vendors are able to get access to species like anchovies and ribbon fish, but not the higher-value fish. They use local buses to reach nearby markets. This puts them at a disadvantage, as male vendors often have their own transport, and are able to reach landing centres and markets faster, and thus earn more profits.

The facilities in markets are very poor—there is no shelter, toilets, or childcare facilities.

Women vendors have not yet been given identity cards, despite several assurances from the government. The absence of identity cards prevents women vendors from accessing schemes such as the saving-cum-relief scheme or the one on insurance. Access to credit is also difficult. They are forced to take loans from moneylenders at very high interest rates, especially as there are no SHGs or Saving groups in the area. Since the vendors lack access to ice boxes to store fish, they still use baskets.

*Dakshinbangla Matsyajibi Forum*

According to Ratna Mahji, the Dakshinabangla Matsyajibi Forum is also affiliated to the NFF. It works in two districts of West Bengal—East Midnapore and 24 Parganas. It is an organization of coastal fishers and fishworkers, which includes four local organizations—Kanthi Mahakuma Khoti Matsyajibi Unnayan Samiti, Kakdwip Fishermen Association, Jharkhali Matsyajibi Samiti and Jharkhali Kshudra Masya Byabasai Samiti.

The women fishworkers are mostly fish sorters. Some of them are engaged in drying and selling fish. They work under difficult conditions, coping with the absence of toilets, for example. They have to dry fish on the ground, as they cannot afford racks. They have no access to grants, loans or credit. Yet they are expected to maintain hygienic conditions, without which the quality of their products and the prices they get will be affected. Women fish sorters and processors face several health problems, such as rashes on their hands. However, there are no efforts to identify and address these problems. The large markets are controlled by male fish vendors and women are not allowed to sell their fish there.

## Group 2: Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa

*Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti (MMKS), Arnala Fishermen Sarvodaya Sahakari Society Ltd., Thane Zila Macchimar Sangha, Mahila Macchimar Co-operative Society*

Maharashtra was represented by several organizations and individuals. The Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti (MMKS) is a State-level organization working with fishworker organizations and co-operatives in Maharashtra. Its representatives, Ramakrishna Tandel and Purnima Meher, highlighted some of the key issues facing fishworkers in India and in Maharashtra, in particular. They said that the success of the campaign against the proposed Coastal Management Zone (CMZ) Notification, which was to replace the CRZ Notification, was a big victory for fishworkers all over India. Fishworker organizations, including MMKS, are now trying to ensure that the proposed Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act for regulation of fishing activities in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) takes into account the concerns of traditional fishworkers and protects their interests.

Jyoti Kiran Koli of the Arnala Fishermen Sarvodaya Sahakari Society Ltd. spoke about the security restrictions on fishing activities after the November 26 terrorist attacks on Mumbai. These restrictions are very oppressive and fishers are being unfairly harassed. The government had earlier promised 'smart' cards for traditional fishers, to enable them to fish without harassment, but even two years on, these cards have not reached everyone, especially the traditional fishermen. Many fishers have to pay fines and face imprisonment due to security regulations.

Ujawala Patil from Mumbai drew attention to the problems faced by about 75 women who collect clams and oysters along Mumbai's coast. These

are due to the enhancement of security measures along the coast following the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. This has led to greater harassment of women by the police. Women fishers engaged in oyster and clam collection should be provided with identity cards by the government, to enable them to continue their work without harassment. There is need to extend support to enable better organization of the women, so that they can defend their interests and livelihoods. The women also face problems in accessing the coast due to various real-estate developments on the sea front.

Jyoti Meher of the Thane Zila Macchimar Sangha spoke about the chemical industrial hub of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) in Tarapur, which has caused high levels of pollution and environmental damage in the Muramba Creek. The water in the creek is red due to the untreated effluent discharge. This has caused fish kills and has adversely affected the health of the fishers who fish in the creek.

Kamini Koide of Sagar Kanya Women Co-operative Society, Malvan, drew attention to the growing tourism development in their areas. Women processors are losing the spaces traditionally used by them to process their fish.

Malvika from the Koli Mahila Matsya Vikreta Shakari Sanstha, a co-operative society formed in January 2010 to empower fish vendors, said that the society currently has 582 members. Facilities at markets were inadequate, she said, and access to toilets and drinking water is poor, resulting in bad hygiene. According to her, another key issue facing women vendors of Mumbai is the entry of non-Maharashtrians (especially from Uttar Pradesh) into the fish-vending business, which has badly affected local fish vendors. Women engaged in door-to-door vending should be



provided with fish vendor licences, as in Gujarat, so that only authorized vendors can engage in fish vending. It was pointed out that fishermen landing catches in Mumbai were willing to sell their fish to anyone with the capacity to purchase, including vendors from other States. Local women vendors do not have the capacity to purchase all the fish. It was pointed out that these issues need further discussion with the various groups with a stake in the issue.

Purmina Meher raised the issue of fisherwomen's co-operatives and women in co-operative societies. Not enough attention is being paid to women's issues in co-operatives, she said. She now works with women's credit co-operatives, helping women gain access to credit.

Vaishali Bhagwan Khadpe and Bhagwan Balkrishan Khadpe, representing the Mahila Macchimar Co-operative Society at Tulsunde, Ratnagiri, spoke about some of the problems they face. Their co-operative has 350 members, all involved in fish vending. The major problem for the women was transportation—the distance to markets was great, and women were not allowed on local buses because of the smell of fish. The co-operative bought a truck to provide transport to the women. The truck fares were almost the same as those of State transport buses, and a subsidy of Rs2 was given to users. However, the service had to be stopped because of harassment from the police over overcrowding.

The other problem pointed out relates to purse-seine net fishing, which is rapidly displacing fishing by traditional gear. The large purse-seiner catches are booked in advance by big companies, and the women find it difficult to get fish to sell. The society is facing various other kinds of problems, and has received little support from the government in terms of loans and schemes for women's co-operatives. There is hardly any incentive for women

members, they said.

*Macchimar Adhikar Sahas Samiti (MASS), Ujas Mahila Sangathan, Kutch, Gujarat*

The representatives from these organizations—Ranuben Ghadvi, Aminaben Ghat and Bharat Patel—said a major issue facing them was the rapid industrialization of their coast. They have united to challenge the Mundra Special Economic Zone (SEZ) promoted by the Adani Group. The project has endangered the livelihoods of nearly 10,000 traditional fisherfolk in the region.

Aminaben from Shekhadiya village, who has been one of the women in the forefront of the agitation against the Mundra SEZ, shared the story of their first agitation against the SEZ. The developers constructed an airstrip close to their village, which blocked their access to the sea. The women mobilized support against the move, and the company was forced to make an access path for the fishers. Unfortunately, another port being built on the coast now threatens the livelihoods of the fishers.

A case regarding the environmental impacts of the port is pending with the National Environmental Appellate Authority (NEAA) and Aminaben is a key petitioner in the case. Women are in the forefront of the struggle, said Aminaben, as they are actively involved in processing fish for sale, with their families, and will be badly affected if fishing and processing activities are impeded, and if coastal lands traditionally used by them are diverted for industrial and other uses.

Bharat Patel from MASS said that in the Mundra area, fish catches are now only a quarter of what they used to be. He also highlighted some of the key environmental impacts of the SEZ. The Mundra area, in the stretch where the SEZ is coming up, is rich in mangroves and corals. The incessant dredging, however, has led to extreme turbidity

due to which the corals are dying. Further, the company has also created artificial bunds along the coast, which prevent water from entering, thus killing all the mangroves. The company later dumped dredged soil onto these mangrove areas and claimed it to be barren land and, therefore, appropriate for construction. The fish in the Kandla area has also lost its market because it smells of crude oil leaked from the oil rigs in the area, Patel said.

Ranuben, who works as a community mobilizer with the Ujas Mahila Sangathan, shared the story of the community radio, which was initiated by the Sangathan to mobilize other fishers across villages in Kutch against the SEZ and against other developments like power plants in the Kutch/Mundra area, which have affected their livelihoods.

#### *Mapusa Fish Market Bodgeshwar Sanstha, Goa*

Goa was represented by four members of the Mapusa fish vendors' union. Most women vendors buy fish from the Madgaon or Mapusa wholesale market. Some wholesalers like Sujal Govekar purchase fish from the Madgaon market at 2 a.m. in the morning and bring it to the Mapusa market to sell to small vendors. The Madgaon market receives fish from places like Malwan, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

Ashwini Sawant told the group about the dismal conditions of the Mapusa market. Water stagnation has led to several health and hygiene problems. The roof in the old market was falling off at several places, and the women had to fight with the municipal corporation for a new market. Their struggle was successful and they were asked to shift to a temporary market behind the old market. However, the new premise had no proper roof or flooring. The women demanded better conditions, which led to a temporary roof and flooring. The women are now

awaiting the remodelling of the old market, which has been pending for two years. The women were never aware of national-level organizations, nor did they feel the need for them, but after attending the workshop and hearing about the work of organizations like NFF, they said that they would explore the possibilities of doing so.

### **Group 3: Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry**

#### *Ramnad District Fishworkers Trade Union*

Nambuthai and Nambulakshmi, representing the Ramnad District Fishworkers Trade Union from Rameswaram, spoke about the way in which the declaration of the Gulf of Mannar National Park and Biosphere Reserve had affected their lives and livelihoods. Earlier, they used to fish and collect seaweed and shellfish near the islands. However, now, with the ban on fishing, they are not allowed to go near the islands. Even as the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and gatherers have been badly affected, trawling continues unchecked, destroying the marine ecosystem.

These issues have been a cause of considerable concern and conflict. The park authorities have tried to provide alternative livelihoods, to take people away from fishing. The women lamented that the livelihood alternatives offered to them were inappropriate, and that they had little option but to continue fishing 'illegally'. Another problem is that certain parts of the coast are now inaccessible, as aquaculture farms spring up in the Rameswaram area. Conservation moves are denying communities a livelihood from fishing.

The Sethusamudram sea canal project is coming up in the very same area, leading to huge devastation of ecologically sensitive areas, and further affecting fisheries-based livelihoods.

The fishermen in the area also live in constant fear of being arrested by the Sri Lankan navy, said the participants.

#### *Shanthidan*

Pani Mary and Albin Mary spoke of the activities of the organization they work with, Shanthidhan, and how it has helped to support women fishworkers. The organization began in 1982, by organizing women from the fishing communities under savings and credit programmes. This was because credit was hard to come by for women who sold fish in the markets, due to the exorbitant interest rates charged by local moneylenders, and the difficulty in accessing bank loans.

Women also faced problems with transport, as they were not allowed to carry their fish baskets in government-run buses. However, after a lot of struggle, this has changed, and women fish vendors can now enter any transport bus. Shanthidan also provides women with training on hygienic fish processing techniques, which help add value to their products. Fish processors have been trained, for example, to thoroughly wash the fish in sea water itself, which improves the flavour of the fish. Shanthidan has also started night schools in seven villages to enable the children of the fishing community to attend school. Shanthidan also extends help in the form of tuition fees to help bright students complete professional courses.

#### *Centre for Community Services, Tuticorin*

According to Juliet Theresita and Therasa, the main issue facing women fishworkers in Tuticorin district is the fact that they are not allowed to get into buses with their fish. They have been demanding a special bus for fish vendors, as well as a separate fish market. In regular markets, fish vendors are relegated to spaces at the back or

on the fringes, while the prime spots are occupied by vegetable and meat vendors.

#### *SNEHA, Nagapattinam*

Devi, the representative from SNEHA, said that the major issue faced by traditional fishworkers in Nagapattinam is the indiscriminate use of the highly destructive ring-seine and purse-seine nets. As a consequence, the catches of small-scale fishers using other gear have declined. The industries that line the coast are another cause of concern, given the high levels of pollution they cause, which threaten fish resources.

The families of small-scale fishers who go missing after accidents at sea, such as due to collisions with trawlers, find it difficult to claim compensation, which is given only after the body of the dead fisher is found. In case the body is not found, compensation is withheld for seven years and released—if at all—after a long struggle with the authorities. The other problems faced include lack of transportation and markets, and poor educational facilities for children.

#### *Udal Uzayapur Thozilalar Sangam, Pondicherry*

Vatchala and Saraswathy spoke of the impact of the growing coastal tourism on the livelihoods of fisherwomen. Women dry-fish processors, especially in villages located along the East Coast Road (ECR), are losing access to the spaces they traditionally used. After the construction of the ECR, several tourist resorts have displaced fishing communities.

Women engaged in fish marketing face frequent accidents on the expressway. At the same time, large tracts of coastal lands are being earmarked for industrial development. In the absence of legal rights to their land in the form of *pattas* (title deeds), fishing communities are unable to fight displacement, merely by asserting their customary rights. In areas like



Pondicherry where there are many industries, the sea is being used to dump industrial effluents, leading to pollution and fish kills.

*South Canara Regional Fisherwomen's Organization, Karnataka*

Usha Rani and Geetha Vishu Kumar said that the South Canara Regional Fisherwomen's organization is a caste-based organization (for the Mogaveera caste). It organizes people from 79 villages and is affiliated with Mahajana Sankha, which is a State-level federation. There are 42 castes within the Mogaveeras, of which six are Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) and 32 come under Ganga Kula. The SC/ST members are shell collectors.

The major problem that women fishworkers face in Karnataka is the absence of a proper market. The markets mostly belong to the corporation, and most auction places are dominated by men. Women are not allowed to participate in the auction. Women are not well represented in decision-making bodies, either.

In the markets, apart from the gate fee, women are required to pay Rs2 as 'sitting' charges. Water, if needed, has to be bought at a rate of Re1 per bucket. There are no proper lights or toilet facilities in the markets. Women fish vendors are also facing problem from the Karnataka Fisheries Development Corporation (KFDC), which gets fish directly from the fishermen for sale. This affects the sales of other fish vendors.

Women fish vendors are sometimes unable to get fish directly from the boats, and end up buying fish at a higher rate from middlemen. Thus, the price at which they are forced to sell their fish is often higher than the price at KFDC outlets. Earlier, women used to supply fish to hotels; however, this has also been now taken over by KFDC.

*Stree Niketan Vanitha Federation, Kerala*

Stella Solomon and Celin Milton said that Stree Niketan Vanitha Federation (SNVF), formed in 1990, was earlier attached to the Trivandrum District Fishermen's Federation (TDFF). It started operating as an independent federation from 1993. Their primary aim was to instill the savings habit in women, and to increase their awareness.

SNVF has also taken up other activities for women, like training in carpentry and boat building. There was good demand for boats made by women. However, the training has been stopped due to shortage of funds. SNVF has partnered with the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) to impart training in dry-fish processing.

SNVF has set up a welfare fund for families of those fishermen who pass away. An amount of Rs20,000 is given to the next of kin. For this purpose, an amount of Rs100 is collected from each SNVF member every year.

*Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), Kerala*

Sita Dasan and Anna Mary said that SEWA is recognized as a central trade union which organizes women in the unorganized sector. SEWA has a national council with various State councils as its members. SEWA Kerala is a member of the national council. All those in the unorganized sector, including fish vendors, waste collectors, domestic workers, women engaged in rubber tapping, construction workers, headload workers, weavers, street vendors, and so on, are members of SEWA. It is only in Kerala that women fishworkers are also members of the union. SEWA Kerala networks with other organizations like the national trade union network, Kerala StreeVedi, and the National Association of Street Vendors (NASVI).

With regard to the problems faced by women fishworkers associated with SEWA Kerala, Anna Mary said that the competition for fish is a key issue, as women have to compete with men and other powerful agents for the fish that is landed on the beach. Women are also required to pay various kinds of taxes, including Church fees. For every transaction of Rs1,000 they are required to pay Rs10 to the church. Auction fees also have to be paid to the person who conducts the auction.

In some cases, where fish is not locally available, the women have to travel great distances to procure fish, at considerable cost. Women who have to compete for fish at harbours face different kinds of problem. They need to reach the harbour very early in the morning, when the boats come in. This means they have to often stay near the harbour to get there early enough. In such cases, they may be forced to stay on the beaches, in the streets or in front of shops. In such circumstances they face harassment. Due to the unavailability of fish, some women fish vendors have taken to other occupations like headload work.

The problems women face in markets are different. Often women fish vendors have to pay between Rs10 and Rs80 for taking one basket of fish inside the market. The sitting charges are Rs2-5. If a vendor brings more than one basket, it is mandatory for her to employ the organized headload workers in the market; vendors are not allowed to carry the baskets themselves.

This is another kind of extortion, as this means an additional expense of Rs50 to Rs150. If the women resist such extortion, they are verbally abused and sometimes even physically attacked. They are also denied a place to sit in the market.

Women vendors also face problems in accessing loans from banks, since they cannot afford the time needed to deal with the loan procedures, as it would result in the loss of several days of work. The women are thus forced to go to moneylenders who offer ready cash loans at exorbitant rates of interest. The lack of potable water is another major problem. In some places, the women have to pay between Rs2 and Rs5 for a pot of drinking water. Lack of sanitation, lack of drainage facilities, lack of land title deeds, and other social problems like alcoholism and marriage dowry haunt the women of fishing communities.

SEWA is currently engaged with work related to the National Street Vendors Policy and is trying to get a policy for street vendors at the State level. It is also struggling against the government's move to remove all street vendors, and is planning a march to the State Legislative Assembly. The unions of street vendors in Kerala work under a co-ordination committee, which takes up all the struggles. The co-ordination committee works under the leadership of the SEWA Kerala union. SEWA Kerala has also started to involve itself in issues related to markets. 3



RAMYA/ICSF



Participants from Maharashtra and West Bengal at the workshop, highlighted issues relating to credit

RAMYA/ICSF



Women from Gujarat, shared their story of their first agitation against Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

## Situating Issues in the Context of Fisheries and Coastal Development

Facilitator: Nalini Nayak

This session was meant to help put the day's discussion within the larger context of fisheries and coastal development in the country. Nalini Nayak started the discussion by asking participants to reflect on the different roles of women: in the family and in the community, as workers within or outside the fisheries, and finally, in society itself. Interestingly, none of the participants spoke of their roles as mothers and caretakers. Women themselves do not acknowledge these important roles, because these roles are taken for granted, pointed out Nalini.

As citizens, women have voting rights and 33 per cent reservation in the *gram panchayats*, said one of the participants from Kerala. Another participant pointed out that despite the reservation in *panchayats*, in practice, men still wield control—they feel threatened with women in power. The same situation is true of many NGOs as well, which prevent women from holding positions of power.

Some of the male participants made the point that in India, women had always enjoyed power, with some of the most powerful posts in the country held by women. This provided an opportunity to draw attention to the fact that women are not a homogenous category. While certain influential women had better access to power, women belonging to economically and socially marginalized sections had little or no access to power or decisionmaking. Certain groups, such as fishers, are often also marginalized as a community. Taking the example of the fishers of Kutch who are facing displacement due

to industrial and other developments, Nalini made the point that the laws of the land are constantly being modified to suit the interests of an economically powerful class of people.

These issues were then placed in the wider fisheries context by presenting the following statistics on fisheries production, trade and fishing communities (see Appendix 3):

- Marine and inland fish production in India (1950-2008)
- Production from capture fisheries and aquaculture (1950-2007)
- Marine and freshwater capture fish production (1950-2007)
- Production from freshwater and brackishwater culture (1950-2007)
- Sector-wise marine production (mechanized, motorized and non-mechanized) (2003-2008)
- Percentage contribution by different sectors to marine fish production by State (2004)
- Export quantity and value (1961-62 to 2007-08)
- Quantity and value of fish products imported (1976-2007)
- Number of active fishers by sector (1980 and 1998)
- Number of fishing vessels by sector (1980 and 1998)
- Production per active fishing vessel by sector (1980 and 1998)
- Annual per capita production per active fisher by sector (1980 and 1998)
- Number of men and women involved in marketing of fish (2005 census)

The data shown indicated that India's fish production has increased rapidly since the 1950s, with modernization,



technological change and growth in demand in export and domestic markets. While inland fish production, particularly from aquaculture, continues to grow, marine capture fish production has been leveling off from the second half of the 1990s.

In 2007, about 75 per cent of marine capture production was by mechanized fishing units (using trawls, gill-nets and purse-seines), while a little more than 20 per cent was from motorized fishing units and about five per cent from unpowered fishing units. In the west coast States of Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat and Karnataka, a much larger proportion of catches is from the mechanized fleet. On the other hand, the non-mechanized sector still contributes to fish production in the east coast States of Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu and Orissa. The contribution of the motorized sector is most prominent in Kerala, followed by Pondicherry, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Information from a CMFRI study<sup>1</sup> was presented, showing that in 1998, there were 1,60,000 non-mechanized vessels (67 per cent), 32,000 motorized vessels (13 per cent) and 47,000 mechanized vessels (20 per cent). However, in terms of employment, the non-mechanized sector employs the vast majority of active fishermen—approximately 66 per cent of the total, even though the annual per capita catch of these fishermen is only 328 kg, about three per cent of the annual per capita catch of an active fisherman on a mechanized vessel.

Several participants commented on the link between growing mechanization of the sector and dwindling fisheries resources. The gear used by the mechanized sector, such as trawls, is known to destroy fishing grounds and

lead to enormous bycatch and killing of juveniles. As mechanization and use of technology have increased, so has the pressure on resources. Small-scale fishers have been forced to compete for catches, and have had to invest more and more in motors, fuel and fishing gear. Increasing costs of fishing operations and uncertain catches, are fuelling greater violence and alcoholism in families, as well as demands for larger dowry. The women participants could immediately relate to the discussion, sharing their own experiences.

Nalini pointed out that 'modernization' of the sector has been supported by the State, often through huge subsidies, even as the benefits of several subsidies provided, such as diesel subsidies, are being enjoyed mainly by the mechanized sector. As the fishing sector has become more fuel- and technology-intensive, a major demand of fishworker groups is for diesel subsidies. Such demands, which mainly benefit a minority, need to be questioned, she said. Some of the women noted that "we are fishing not for ourselves, but for oil and motor companies, given that a majority of our income from fishing goes towards paying for fuel, motors and fishing gear".

The implications of the centralization of landings linked to mechanized, harbour-based fisheries, was also discussed. Women said that they now have to travel greater distances to reach distant harbours, at higher costs. Due to the time taken to travel to markets and harbours, the time they get with their family is significantly reduced. At the harbour, they have to compete with export agents, and often they can purchase only low-value fish, especially since they have little access to credit.

With limited capacity to store fish, they can purchase only in small quantities. The example of the two fishing harbours in Mumbai was given. The access of local women vendors to

<sup>1</sup>Sathiadas. R and Biradar R.S (2000). Fisheries in the Development of Indian Economy. In Sathiadas R and Venkateshvaran K (eds): *Proceedings of National Seminar of Fisheries Economics, Extension and Management*. January 5 and 6, 2000. CIFE.

fish is declining, even as merchants get the bulk of the high-quality catch. There is a need for women to form co-operatives to purchase fish. That would help them compete in such a difficult context, suggested a participant.

Women also commented on the increase in exports, particularly of locally consumed species such as ribbon fish. Given that catches from marine fisheries have stabilized, the growing volumes of marine fish being exported will have major implications for the livelihoods of women processors, vendors and traders who cater to local consumers. A participant from Kerala gave the example of her State, where the availability of ribbon fish has become scarce, as much of it is now exported

to China from Gujarat. Earlier, ribbon fish found its way to markets in Kerala. A woman participant from Goa noted that such trends could soon translate into severe food insecurity in the coastal areas.

The participants found interesting data from the Marine Fisheries Census, 2005, which showed that among marine fishing communities, nearly 74 per cent of those engaged in fish marketing were women. There is clearly need, it was stressed, for more focus on women workers in fisheries, particularly on resolving issues like transportation and market infrastructure. Fishworker unions and organizations need to focus more on marketing issues if they want to address women's issues in fisheries. 3





DHARMESH SHAH/ICSF

A fisherwoman cutting fish for a customer at the Urwa market, Mangalore, Karnataka

## Review of First Day

Facilitator: Nalini Nayak

The second day began with a review of the key points made during discussions on the first day of the workshop. Given some of the issues identified the previous day, particularly on the model of fisheries development being pursued which was not only destroying resources, but also the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and women fishworkers, participants were encouraged to 'dream' about what kind of future they wanted for their communities.

Several of the participants said that their dream was to see more sustainable forms of fishing, which were less fuel-dependent. They pointed to positive developments that could be drawn on; in southern Maharashtra, for example, fishermen have started using sails to return from fishing grounds, saving on diesel. On a practical note, a woman from Tamil Nadu pointed out that while women could dream what they want, the difficult task was really to persuade the fishermen, who find it difficult today to fish without motors.

Another participant from Maharashtra said she would like to see more sustainable gear, and an end to practices such as trawling, which captured many juveniles as bycatch. It was pointed out that the scientific community is working on designs that could reduce bycatch in trawling and if communities were to work together with scientists, perhaps this dream could be achieved.

Women from Kerala said their dream was to go back to traditional ways of fishing, where a variety of gear was used according to the season and the species targeted. They also wanted to see their marine ecosystems, particularly mangroves and corals, protected and

regenerated, and their fish resources replenished. Women from West Bengal wanted a ban on the use of 'mosquito nets' to collect prawn seed.

Our dream, said the women, is to be able to get more fish—fish production should be increased in sustainable ways, and the government should work towards this goal. Women from Maharashtra said they would like to see a three-month monsoon ban on fishing, to allow resources to regenerate. There should be selective export of fish, said another participant. Locally consumed species should not be exported. Women need to be provided with subsidized loans, and markets should be provided with good facilities, managed and controlled by women vendors.

"Our sector generates so much wealth, yet we struggle to make ends meet", said another participant. "We dream of the day when we will be entitled to adequate welfare and social security to enable us to live with dignity." A certain percentage of the revenue generated from fish exports should be allocated to schemes for fishing community welfare, it was suggested.

The group from Orissa said that fishing was banned for a four-month period in the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary during the nesting season for olive ridley turtles. Their dream was to see fishermen and women provided with economic aid during this period, to enable them to survive.

Other women said that they would like to see their work in net making restored. Earlier, women were engaged in net making, which provided an income for the fishing household. However, with the spread of net-making machines, women have lost

this important source of employment and income. In Maharashtra, women's co-operatives are demanding the restoration of this employment opportunity. Nalini recalled the way in which several thousands of women in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu were displaced when net-making machines were introduced in the late 1970s, despite their protests. The women had asked their husbands to join them in the protest; however, that did not happen, and women lost their jobs.

Women from Maharashtra said they dreamt of the day when liquor shops in coastal fishing villages would be closed, given the problems faced by families and communities due to alcoholism.

Participants from Gujarat said that their dream was to fight successfully against the displacement they are facing, and the pollution that is affecting their fishing grounds and livelihoods. Participants rallied behind the slogan "Coastal lands and resources should belong to those who fish", in the spirit of "land to the tiller".



## Government Schemes for Women in Post-harvest Fisheries

Facilitator: Chandrika Sharma

In this session, participants were introduced to various government schemes for women in the post-harvest sector. Information about national- and State-level schemes was distributed as part of a longer (draft) publication titled "Women Fish Vendors in India: An Information Booklet". National and State schemes were also translated into the respective language of each State. Maharashtra was the only State for which such information was not available.

It was noted that putting together information on the schemes had not been easy, though such information should be easily available in the public domain, especially to those in the sector. It was particularly difficult to get information about budget outlays and the actual expenditure on the schemes.

Information about the centrally sponsored National Welfare Scheme for Fishermen, launched by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1992-93, with three components—Group Accident Insurance Scheme (GAIS), Development of Model Fishermen Villages (MVS) and Saving-cum-Relief (SCR) Programme—was shared with participants. In 2009-10, administrative approval was given for the implementation of the National Welfare Scheme for Fishermen, with an additional fourth component on Training and Extension.

Under the SCR, Rs600 each is contributed by the State, the Centre and the fisher, respectively. The total amount collected, that is, Rs1,800, is given as subsistence during the three-month monsoon ban period. In some States, like Kerala, Orissa and Tamil Nadu, this scheme has been extended

to fisherwomen; however, this is not true of some other States. In Tamil Nadu, according to government sources, this scheme has been extended to fisherwomen, without Central assistance. In Andhra Pradesh, women are demanding that this scheme be extended to them.

Overall, States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have several welfare schemes in place for fishermen and fisherwomen, while in States like Gujarat and Maharashtra, this is not the case. Support for fisherwomen's groups in Andhra Pradesh had been mainly through SHGs, which helped make available credit to fisherwomen.

Even where progressive schemes were in place, implementation is not always good, it was noted. The Kerala Fishermen's Welfare Fund Board, for example, faces a chronic shortage of funds, affecting its ability to actually implement the welfare measures. While fishworker organizations in Kerala had demanded that a small percentage of the export earnings from fisheries be given to the welfare board, that has been challenged in court by exporters. It was noted that the total outlay and expenditure on diesel subsidies, which benefit mainly the mechanized sector, is likely to be higher than for welfare schemes, though precise estimates are not available.

After this brief overview, participants were given time to discuss national and State schemes, and to comment on them and their implementation within their own States. The feedback from participants is summarized below.

### ***Andhra Pradesh***

Lakshmi from the Andhra Pradesh Traditional Fishworkers Union said that the coverage of the SCR is not uniform, as it reaches only a few villages and within these villages, only a few people benefit. The SCR scheme, at present, does not cover women fishworkers. Further, the relief payments are not disbursed during the time it is most needed, which is the monsoon ban period, causing a lot of inconvenience. Awareness about various schemes is low among fishing communities.

There are many fishing communities, such as those in Vijaynagaram district, which still lack access to basic services like healthcare centres and schools. The funds available for fishermen villages should be used to ensure basic services, said Lakshmi. There is particular need to improve storage facilities for women vendors and traders. On the issue of SHGs, Lakshmi spoke about the Matsya Mitra Groups (MMGs) organized by the Fisheries Department. Membership in MMGs is open only to women who are members of fisherwomen co-operative societies. It would be better if the government takes the initiative to include all women's societies under MMG, said Lakshmi.

### ***Kerala***

Participants said that they were not aware about many of the schemes that had been compiled in the report, which highlighted the need for proper information dissemination about such schemes. The benefits of the SCR scheme do not reach all fishers; thus there is a need to assess the impact and coverage of the scheme. The participants from Kerala agreed that the coverage of the old-age pension scheme was good, but they were surprised to notice that there were only 2,623 beneficiaries in all of Kerala.

### ***Tamil Nadu***

The participants from Nagercoil district said that they faced the same problem as the Andhra fishers in the implementation of the SCR scheme. Only one member per family could benefit from the scheme, which was limiting, as most families had several members engaged in fisheries, and the money was insufficient to cover them all. Tamil Nadu has a separate fishermen's welfare board, currently located in the Fisheries Department. Organizations in Tamil Nadu are, however, demanding that it be shifted to the Labour Department. There is no representation of trade unions on the board, which forces fishworkers to deal with the bureaucratic system themselves, in order to gain membership and to avail of benefits.

### ***Orissa***

The Orissa fishworkers pointed to the specific problem they face due to the Gahirmatha turtle sanctuary. As fishing is prohibited for six months from 1 November to 31 May, fishworkers' livelihoods are badly affected. However, they are not compensated during the ban period, which leads to tremendous economic hardship, distress, migration and even suicide.

### ***Maharashtra***

The schemes can only be availed by below poverty line (BPL) card holders. The criteria for defining the BPL category tend to be arbitrary and inappropriate. For example, houses with television sets are considered above the poverty line. Participants from Maharashtra were of the opinion that welfare schemes should be available to all fishworkers, whether BPL or not. While the SCR scheme covered women fishworkers as well, there is little awareness about it, and coverage and implementation remain poor. In Maharashtra, there are no other schemes for women fishworkers;

the overall budgetary allocation for fisheries welfare schemes in the State is, in general, very low. According to N. D. Koli, General Secretary, NFF, only one per cent of the State budget is earmarked for the fisheries sector, and this budget is for all developmental work in fisheries; welfare schemes are lowest on the agenda.

Participants demanded that, given that women workers are as prone to accidents as men, insurance schemes should be available for women as well. Women should also be given identity cards in order to avoid harassment by coastal security guards, as in the specific case of women oyster and clam collectors along Mumbai's coast following the Mumbai terrorist attacks. On the issue of transportation, the government of Maharashtra has reserved special coaches in Mumbai's local trains for fisherwomen. However, these coaches are run only upto 1 p.m.; the running hours need to be extended, said the participants.

### **Goa**

Participants from Goa said that there was need for better implementation of existing schemes, as well as more welfare schemes, for women fishworkers. Women, for example, had received ice boxes against payment of Rs300. However, these were small and of poor quality. There was also need to make available credit for fish vendors, and to improve facilities at fish markets, such as the market at Mapusa. The number of buses for women vendors should be increased and they should cover more routes; at present, there is only one special bus for fisherwomen from the Kadamba bus stop to the Mapusa market.

### **West Bengal**

Participants from East Midnapore, West Bengal, drew attention to several problems faced by women vendors

and processors at landing centres and markets. Fish vendors need to be provided with identity cards (as in the case of fish processors) so that they can avail of schemes such as SCR and old-age pension. Paucity of credit and loans from government sources is a critical problem, forcing women to borrow from moneylenders at high rates of interest. There is need for drying platforms, toilet facilities and crèches at markets and landing centres. In the absence of electricity supply, subsidized kerosene needs to be made available. More training programmes for improving fish-processing methods are needed; of 4,000 women fishworkers, only 100 have received training so far, and that too in fishmeal processing and not for other types of processing.

### **Karnataka**

Participants from Karnataka said that the loan amounts offered under government schemes were very low, and need to be increased. There is also need for old-age pension schemes. Corruption is also an issue—for example, village officers sometimes demand bribes for providing the income certificates required to access these schemes.

### **Gujarat**

There are very few welfare schemes for fishworkers in Gujarat, said the participants, and even the few schemes that are offered are not implemented or implementable. For instance, women are offered a subsidy of Rs5,000 for purchase of fish, but only if they buy fish from a co-operative. There are 22 fishing co-operatives in Gujarat, but since all of them cater to fish exports, this scheme does not help local processors and traders. In Kutch, most of the traditional fishermen—the *pagadiyas*—fish without boats (on foot). As they live next to the coast during the fishing season, the scheme by



which cycles are offered to fishworkers, makes little sense. Also, under the scheme, only ten cycles are split among ten districts every year. It would be better, suggested the participants, to allocate the funds unused under these schemes to build healthcare and education facilities at the community level.

### **Summary**

In summary, based on the problems identified, participants felt that it was important that State governments address the following issues with respect to welfare schemes:

- Improve information dissemination about welfare schemes, including about budgetary allocations and expenditure.
- Ensure that schemes are more inclusive by eliminating clauses like BPL status or co-operative memberships as conditions to access schemes. Ensure that the SCR scheme is extended to all members in a family engaged in fisheries.
- Ensure that women fishworkers are covered by the SCR scheme in all States, as well as by insurance schemes.
- Ensure proper implementation of existing schemes, providing adequate funds for their implementation.
- Design and make available credit schemes for women fishworkers, appropriate to their needs.
- Provide official identity cards to women fishworkers, to enable them to access welfare schemes, and to engage in their work without harassment.
- Ensure that welfare schemes are taken up by all States, including States like Gujarat and Maharashtra, which currently have taken up minimal implementation of such schemes.
- Undertake an assessment of the impact and coverage of welfare schemes.
- Consult with fishworkers regarding the kind of schemes that are most useful for them, eliminating schemes not seen as useful and that remain only on paper.
- Investigate corruption in implementation of schemes, and take steps to eliminate it.
- Ensure that adequate and appropriate compensation is provided to fishworkers deprived of their livelihoods in States like Orissa, which imposes a ban on fishing so as to promote turtle conservation.
- In the case of Tamil Nadu, the Fishermen's Welfare Boards should come under the purview of the Labour Department and unions should be represented in the board.
- Commit funds to improving:
  - transportation facilities for women vendors and traders;
  - facilities at landing centres and markets (like toilets, storage facilities, shelter, water, crèches);
  - processing facilities (drying racks, etc.) and
  - training in improving processing techniques; and community infrastructure. 3

## Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 and the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors

Presenter: Mecanzy Dabre, YUVA Urban, Mumbai

This session dwelt on the provisions of the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors and the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act 2008. These sessions were facilitated by Mecanzy Dabre from YUVA, an organization that, among other things, works to secure the human rights of vulnerable populations in urban areas, and to create cities that are just, equitable and sustainable.

### ***Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008***

Mecanzy provided some basic facts about the unorganized sector in India. It is estimated that there are about 42 crore (420 mn) unorganized workers employed in about 127 different sectors, with maximum numbers being in agriculture, followed by construction, street vending and fisheries. Workers in the unorganized sector form nearly 93 per cent of the total workforce in India, and the sector is estimated to contribute about 65 per cent to India's gross domestic product (GDP). According to a report of a committee chaired by Arjun Sengupta, the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, nearly 78 per cent of the workers in the sector make less than Rs20 per day, while a majority of women do not receive even minimum wages. The Arjun Sengupta committee recommended that legislation to promote the welfare of the unorganized sector, the backbone of the Indian economy, was necessary.

The need for a comprehensive social security Act for the unorganized sector has also been a strong demand of unions and civil society since 1996. This was also in view of the success of such welfare legislation at the State

level, which underlined the need for an umbrella legislation at the national level.

However, the Social Security Act, 2008, that was finally legislated, was found wanting on many counts. The concerns about, and shortcomings of, the Act have been detailed by a coalition, Social Security Now, comprising organizations such as people's movements, trade unions, civil society organizations, farmers' associations and other groups from all over India. Among the main concerns are:

- The rights to social security are not justiciable. The social-security schemes included are given in a schedule (appendix), which essentially means that schemes can be changed at any point of time, denying workers the benefit of consistency and justiciability. Moreover, it is only existing schemes that are put together—no new schemes have been proposed at all. All existing schemes are meant only for the BPL category.
- The proposed budget outlay for implementation of the schemes is a paltry Rs1,500 crores, less than one per cent of India's GDP. For a workforce that is 93 per cent of India's total workforce, a minimal allocation of at least five per cent of India's GDP is necessary.
- Unpaid productive work that women do in the household, like rearing of animals for milk or meat or vegetables for the market, does not qualify women for worker's benefits, as wage or monthly earnings are a precondition for being considered as 'unorganized worker'.

- There is no board or body, with representation of trade unions, to oversee the implementations of the schemes. The government has shown unwillingness to take responsibility for implementing the Act, and most of the proposed schemes under the Act, like health insurance and education, are to be outsourced to private firms for implementation.

Unions and civil society organizations are now organizing to seek amendments to the Act, and to increase budgetary provisions for its implementation. However, despite the many flaws, the mere existence of such legislation is a positive thing. At the moment, an important strategy would be for all unorganized sector workers, through their unions/associations, to register with the concerned department designated under the Act.

Participants, noting that many women working in fisheries are not registered, agreed that it was important for them to create their own unions/associations, and seek identity cards specifying the work they are doing in the fisheries. It was pointed out that women fishworkers could either register through an existing union, or create their own unions.

### ***National Policy on Urban Street Vendors***

Providing a background to the street vendor policy, the presenter said that, based on the recommendations of the Second Labour Commission, it was acknowledged that integration of informal sector workers into city planning was important for the balanced growth of urban spaces. Hawkers constitute nearly two per cent of the urban population and women form nearly 49 per cent of the hawker population.

The National Policy on Urban Street Vendors was first issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty

Alleviation, Government of India (GoI), in 2004. The policy was drafted based on the recommendations of a National Task Force that was created in August 2001 and following years of struggle by trade unions and workers' rights groups. It was considered a good policy concerning vendors' rights. The revised National Policy was released in 2009, along with the Model Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Bill, 2009, to facilitate the enactment of appropriate legislation at the State level. States and Union Territories are expected to play a proactive role in enacting legislation on street vending, and to frame rules and schemes, taking note of the National Policy and the Model Bill. It is crucial to be vigilant about the amendments that are made at the State and municipal level, cautioned Mecanzy.

The presenter stressed the importance of knowing about city plans, and of participating in processes underway to discuss/finalize these plans. The disclosure of city plans should be made mandatory. He shared his experience of working on the street vendor policy in Mumbai, and the way in which spaces allotted for hawking in city plans were being misused by large businesses or taken over by commercial establishments. For instance, 2.5 per cent of the city space has to be reserved for 'natural markets' but in Mumbai, this provision was twisted and a multi-storied 'hawkers plaza' was built, defeating the very concept of hawking. He stressed the importance of street vendors being involved in the implementation of this policy as it recognizes the rights of the street vendors who have long been left out of city planning and are often considered illegal.

Mecanzy presented some findings from a recent study on the status of street hawkers in nine major States, covering 12 cities across India, which explored the implementation of the street vendor policy. In most major cities



like Mumbai, Pune and Delhi, the rights of hawkers, as provided for by the policy, were seen to be commonly violated through frequent eviction drives, poor facilities, and diversion of hawking zones for commercial establishments and shopping malls. Participatory approaches to deal with hawker issues were yet to be adopted.

The presenter stressed that street vendor organizations need to work on the following issues and use the following policy provisions:

- The policy contains a provision for formation of a Town Vending Committee (TVC) for the purpose of managing street vendors and ensuring the implementation of the various schemes and measures of the National Policy through a participatory process. Under the policy, there needs to be between 20-40 per cent representation by hawkers. Unions need to negotiate for 40 per cent representation in TVCs to ensure better bargaining powers in decisionmaking. One-third representation of women in TVCs should be ensured.
- The policy provides for ensuring basic facilities in markets, such as water, electricity and sanitation. Large budgetary allocations have been made under national schemes like the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) for BPL urban housing, vendors' welfare, infrastructure development, etc. Unions can seek funds from these schemes for better facilities at markets, and for housing and infrastructure.
- The policy has provisions to declare hawking and no-hawking zones, the latter near schools, temples, train stations, etc. Unions should not agree to the demarcation of non-hawking zones. The unions should, instead, propose and implement strict self-governance so that no inconvenience is caused to pedestrians and traffic.
- The demand should be for licences to vend. Vendors should not agree to licences that are valid for a specific length of time (say, ten years). In cases where the family is involved in vending, licences should be in the name of both the man and the woman. All vendors should seek registration, even if vending on a seasonal or part-time basis.
- The policy also has provisions for budgetary allocation to conduct training to improve presentation, cleanliness and hygiene. These provisions should be operationalized.
- Unions should seek to ensure that workshops with trade unions, the police, etc. on hawking issues, as per the provisions in the policy, are actually organized.

Mecanzy ended by encouraging participants to form vendor unions and to seek registration. He also informed participants that there are, at present, two national organizations formed to address such issues: the National Hawkers Federation and the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). 3



DHARMESH SHAH/ICSF

Fish vendor marketing pomfret and tuna at the Mirkarwada fish market, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra



# Implementation of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification and the Draft Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009

Facilitator: Chandrika Sharma

In the morning session of the last day, participants were introduced to the debate around the CRZ Notification and the Draft Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009.

## ***Draft Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009***

Chandrika Sharma, recalling the discussions on the previous day that had dwelt on the rapid changes within the fisheries sector, and the growing pressure on fish resources, sought the opinion of participants on the need for better management of resources, including in the EEZ. The response from participants was unequivocal: there is urgent need to manage fisheries resources and to ban the use of destructive fishing gear and technologies. It was pointed out that while the Maritime Zones of India (MZI) Act regulates foreign fishing vessels in the Indian EEZ, there is no regulation of Indian fishing vessels in the EEZ. Given the growing pressure on resources, there is clear need for regulation and management, and an EEZ Act has been a long-standing demand of unions and NGOs and unions, such as the NFF.

Participants were provided a brief overview of the draft MFRMA. This draft Act had been sent to State government for their comments, it was informed. The Central government had also initiated consultations with fishworker organizations, NGOs and other organizations.

The views of the NFF and some NGOs on the draft MFRMA were then shared. Most importantly, the objectives of the Act need to be expanded to include the

protection of the livelihood security of traditional fishing communities and their preferential rights to access fish resources in all the maritime zones of India. It was also stressed that, given that fish is a mobile resource, there is need to harmonize State management plans with management plans for the EEZ, and to ensure that management plans are prepared in a consultative manner (with representation of fishermen and women). There is also need to review the excessive and inappropriate punishments proposed in the draft Act, to ensure that punishment is proportionate to the offence. Further an owner-operator principle for vessel ownership should be considered, to ensure that fishing rights rest with those who actually fish.

In the discussion that followed, a participant from Orissa said that the Act fails to define a 'fisherman', which is a serious lacuna. Referring to the huge ring-seine boats of Kerala, which claim to be 'traditional', a participant said there is need to clarify the definition of 'traditional fishing'. Fishworker organizations should take a stand on such issues, and ensure support to those who are really small-scale, and use sustainable gear.

The issue of why women need to be part of the consultative process for finalizing the Act was also discussed. Participants agreed that women's interests and access to fish are best protected when fish landings are diversified, beach-based and small-scale. Women need to be part of decision-making processes on fisheries management, to protect their



own interests, their access to fish, the interests of their communities, and the long-term sustainability of resources, it was noted.

### ***Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification***

The presentation on this topic provided participants with information from CMFRI's Marine Fisheries Census 2005. According to this, there are 3,202 marine fishing villages along the approximately 6,000-km long coastline of mainland India. The number of fishing villages, according to the census, was highest in Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The data shows that fishing communities are practically present all along India's coastline, and that they are, therefore, important rights-holders on the coast.

Several of the participants said that they had been part of the campaign against the introduction of a new notification—the Coastal Management Zone (CMZ) Notification—to replace the 1991 CRZ Notification, fearing that the new notification would open up the coast for 'development'. Many of them had participated in the *yatra*—"Save the Coast, Save the Fishers"—organized by the NFF, which had campaigned against the introduction of the new Notification. The success of that campaign has been acknowledged—the Union Minister for Environment and Forest had assured those opposing the new Notification that the CRZ Notification of 1991 would remain in force. Since then he had also organized ten public consultations on the issue; the next step by the Ministry, following these consultations, is being awaited.

The provisions of the CRZ Notification of 1991 were briefly explained, in particular the categorization of the 0-500-m

coastal area into four zones, with maximum regulation of activities in the ecologically sensitive CRZ I (the no-development zone). State coastal zone management authorities are required to prepare coastal zone management plans (CZMP), indicating clearly the zonation of the coastal zone. Implementation of the CRZ Notification has, however, been weak, and violations have been common. Twenty-five amendments have been made to the 1991 Notification, many of which have served to dilute its provisions.

At present, civil society groups are seeking better implementation of the CRZ Notification, and a review of the 25 amendments with a view to (i) strengthening the regulatory role of the Notification, and (ii) strengthening the provisions in the Notification to protect the rights of fishing communities to their habitat, if needed, through an amendment.

In this context, there is need to examine the situation regarding fishing-community housing that prevails in different States, it was stressed. It is important to discuss whether provisions to protect fishing-community hamlets in CRZ III are adequate to protect fishing-community interests. For this, the situation in different States needs to be better understood. For example, are fishing communities located in CRZ I areas? Are fishing-community hamlets located in the 0-200-m zone? Proposals for fishing-community housing, and ways to protect the rights of communities to their housing lands, and other coastal lands used by them, should be based on existing realities on the coast. There is also need to procure copies of coastal zone management plans for a more informed discussion, it was said. A participant from Gujarat noted the difficulty in getting access to State coastal zone management plans. 3

## Strategies and Next Steps for Enhancing Women's Roles in Fisheries in India

Facilitator: Nalini Nayak

The final session of the workshop discussed strategies and next steps. Before the discussions started, Purnima Meher was asked to share her experiences of working with local *panchayats* in Palghar *taluk* of Thane district, Maharashtra. Fishing communities here were concerned about plans to construct a captive jetty that would have affected the local ecology and environment and displaced three fishing villages. The Maharashtra fishworkers' union worked closely with the local *panchayats* and obtained a resolution against the construction of the proposed captive jetty. This, along with other pressure tactics, like political lobbying and solidarity from farmers' co-operatives, ensured that the project was dropped.

Participants were then given time to briefly discuss in State groups, and share their plans with other participants. Several State groups, such as those from Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Gujarat, said that they would spread the information they had gathered at the workshop, strengthen their existing organizations and register their unions. They also said they would seek formal registration as workers.

The group from Maharashtra said that they will work to ensure registration of women working in fish-related activities in the union, as workers. Further, they would fight for their right to small fish for selling in domestic markets—such fish is now either being reduced to fishmeal, or exported. They would also procure a copy of the coastal zone management plan, to understand the classification of various zones, and how their interests can be protected. The women also said

that they would explore ways in which fishing-community concerns could be better represented at the *panchayat* level, given that fishing communities are often in a minority in *panchayats*. Several other women participants from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu said that they would engage more with *panchayat* processes.

Women from Tamil Nadu additionally highlighted the need to create strong unions of coastal women in Tamil Nadu, and to network with other coastal States. The participants from Kerala said that they would work for a State-level policy on street vendors, ensuring that even women working at home are recognized as workers. They said they would also work for better representation of women in all relevant committees, including TVCs, and spread awareness about various policy and other developments of relevance to coastal communities. Additionally, they would discuss and propose schemes that focus on women's needs, and ensure that women's needs are reflected in all schemes.

Participants stressed the need to network among themselves, and to seek each other's support, when needed. They requested for help in documenting some of the challenges being faced, for example, by the rapid industrialization of the Kutch coast.

Participants thanked the organizers for holding the workshop, and suggested that it would be useful if such workshops for women in the sector could be organized at least once in two years. They expressed the hope that information of relevance would continue to be made available to them, by ICSF and other groups, to enable

them to defend their interests. This was especially needed since fisheries is such a dynamic sector, and it is important to keep track of the various relevant developments, including about policy processes underway.

Some participants suggested the need to hold such workshops at the State-level, in local languages, as a means of disseminating relevant information and facilitating discussions in every village.

On an emotional note, the participants from West Bengal recalled that Harekrishna Debnath, the erstwhile chairperson of the NFF, was their first teacher, who had taught them and helped them to organize for their rights. It was he who had taught them how to use information, such as that provided at the workshop, for their struggles to retain their livelihoods.

Several participants said it was the first time they were experiencing a workshop of this nature; initially, they had been hesitant to come, since it would mean stopping their work for a few days. However, they had learned a lot at the workshop, and were hopeful that they would be able to use the information obtained to protect their interests and livelihoods. They said that they had found it useful to meet groups from other States, and would seek their support in future struggles and campaigns, as needed. While language difference had made communication somewhat difficult, the interpreters present had helped overcome these difficulties. The workshop ended with a vote of thanks to the interpreters, and to the staff at YUVA centre. 3



# Appendix 1

## Report of the Workshop on Enhancing Women's Roles in Fisheries in India

1–3 February 2010

### Programme

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Monday, 01 February 2010</b>
0800 – 0900 hrs	Registration
0900 – 0930 hrs	Welcome and introduction to the workshop
0930 – 1300 hrs	Self-introduction by participants (in groups of two States each)
1300 – 1400 hrs	Lunch
1400 – 1500 hrs	Reporting back from each group (in plenary)
1500 – 1530 hrs	Tea
1530 – 1730 hrs	Identifying key issues and initiatives based on presentations: Situating issues in the context of the development of fisheries in the country
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Tuesday, 02 February 2010</b>
0900 – 1030 hrs	Review of first day
1030 – 1100 hrs:	Tea
1100 – 1300 hrs:	Government policies and initiatives for the post-harvest sector: Fisheries-specific schemes and initiatives undertaken by Central and State departments, as well as by Central research institutions and intergovernmental organizations (by ICSF Secretariat), and discussion on strategies to access available schemes
1300 – 1400 hrs:	Lunch
1400 – 1530 hrs	Provisions of the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors and its relevance for fish vendors: YUVA/National Hawkers Association  Discussion on experiences and strategies to be adopted in each State
1530 – 1600 hrs:	Tea
1600 – 1800 hrs	The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, and its relevance for women fishworkers: YUVA  Discussion on strategies needed
Post dinner:	Film shows
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Wednesday, 03 February 2010</b>
0900 – 1300 hrs	An overview of policy developments of relevance to fishing communities (Implementation of CRZ Notification and the Draft Marine Fisheries Act, 2009)  Discussion
1300 – 1400 hrs:	Lunch
1400 – 1730 hrs	Discussion on strategies for enhancing women's roles in fisheries in India  Closure of workshop



NEENA KOSHY/ICSF

A woman fish vendor in Unit IV Market,  
Bhubhaneshwar, Orissa

# Appendix 2

## List of Participants

### TAMIL NADU

1. Ms. Devi. M  
Vangakadal Fishworkers' Union  
11/1A Sri Ramakrishna  
Paramahamsar Street  
Velippalayam, Behind Nadar Street  
Nagapattinam 611 001  
TAMIL NADU  
  
Tel : 04365 248674  
Email : snehangt@gmail.com  
coastalactionnetwork@rediffmail.com
2. Ms. Pani Mary  
Shanthidan  
5A-1, Kesari Street,  
Nagercoil-629 001  
TAMIL NADU  
  
Tel : 04652 279564  
Mobile : 94869 34113  
Email : pr\_geeta@yahoo.com
3. Ms. Albin Mary. S  
Shanthidan  
5A-1, Kesari Street,  
Nagercoil 629 001  
TAMIL NADU  
  
Tel : 04652 279564  
Mobile : 96298 20054  
Email : pr\_geeta@yahoo.com
4. Ms. Juliet Theresita  
Centre for Community Services  
8, Nadar Street North  
Tuticorin 628 001  
TAMIL NADU  
  
Tel : 0461 2337893  
Mobile : 98651 47893  
Email : ccs244@yahoo.com
5. Ms. Therasa  
Centre for Community Services  
8, Nadar Street North  
Tuticorin 628 001  
TAMIL NADU  
  
Tel : 0461 2337893

6. Ms. Nambuthai  
Ramnad District Fishworkers  
Trade Union (RFTU)  
No 7, SVM, Petrol Bunk  
Near Velipattnam  
Ramanathpuram 623 504  
TAMIL NADU  
  
Tel : 04567 229072
7. Ms. Nambulakshmi  
Ramnad District Fishworkers  
Trade Union (RFTU)  
No 7, SVM, Petrol Bunk  
Near Velipattnam  
Ramanathpuram 623 504  
TAMIL NADU  
  
Tel : 04567 229072
8. Ms. Vatchala  
Udal Uzayapu Thozilalar Sangam  
26, Anandan Chettiyar Veli  
Periyakalpettu Kuppam  
PONDICHERRY 605 014
9. Ms. Saraswathy  
Udal Uzayapur Thozilalar Sangam  
7, Pudu Nagar  
Periyakalpet  
PONDICHERRY 605 014

### ANDHRA PRADESH

10. Ms. Suneetha  
SNIRD  
Railpet, Ongole  
Prakasham Dist 523 280  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
  
Tel : 08592 232008  
Mobile : 97043 70822  
Email : snird\_org@yahoo.com
11. Ms. K. Bujjamma  
SNIRD  
Railpet, Ongole  
Prakasham Dist 523 280  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
  
Mobile : 98484 93865  
Email : snird\_org@yahoo.com



12. Mr. P. Thirupathi  
SNIRD  
Railpet, Ongole  
Prakasham Dist 523001  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
Mobile : 98493 92539  
Email : snird\_org@yahoo.com
13. Ms. Shobana  
Andhra Pradesh Traditional  
Fishworkers' Union  
Door No.2-5-229  
Appugarh, M.V.P Colony,  
Vishakhapatnam 530017  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
Mobile : 94917 66627  
Email : mgmwalakshmi@yahoo.com
14. Ms. Lakshmi  
Andhra Pradesh Traditional  
Fishworkers' Union  
Door No.2-5-229  
Appugarh, M.V.P Colony,  
Vishakhapatnam 530017  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
Mobile : 92474 77604  
Email : mgmwalakshmi@yahoo.com
15. Ms. Ummidi Kasamma  
District Fishermen Welfare Association  
15-2-33, R.H. Colony  
Gangavaram, Gagavaka Municipality  
Visakhapatnam 530 044  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
Mobile : 92903 57462
16. Ms. Perla Masenaamma  
District Fishermen Welfare Association,  
Visakhapatnam,  
H.No. 17-62-5  
Ramalayam Street, Gangavaram  
Gajuvaka Municipality,  
Visakhapatnam 530 044  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
Mobile : 99630 21023
17. Mr. S.B. Sarma  
Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)  
64-16-3A, Pratap Nagar  
Kakinada 533 004  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
Tel : 0884 2364851  
Mobile : 094405 30687  
Email : sbsarma@gmail.com
- KARNATAKA**
18. Ms. Usha Rani  
Office: S.K.and Udipi District  
Co-operative and Fish Marketing  
Federation  
Mulihithlu,  
Mangalore 575 003  
KARNATAKA  
Res: Gajana Nilaya  
D.No. 7-3-198/8  
Tikaknagar,  
Bolor Katte,  
Mangalore 575 003  
KARNATAKA  
Mobile : 99452 46366  
Email : gangakide@yahoo.com
19. Ms. Geetha Vishu Kumar  
S.K. District Fisherwoman organization  
Kanchan House  
Bolor Katte  
Mangalore 575 003  
KARNATAKA  
Tel : 0824 2450150  
Mobile : 94480 14220  
Email : g\_vishukumar@yahoo.com,
- GOA**
20. Ms. Sujal S. Govekar  
Mapusa Fish Market  
Assagao Bade  
Bardez 403 509  
GOA  
Tel : 2273172  
Mobile : 94238 34230
21. Ms. Tejeswini T. Naik  
Mapusa Fish Market  
Assagao Bade  
Bardez  
GOA
22. Ms. Ashwini Anil Sawant  
Mapusa Fish Market  
H.N. 662 Anjuna Badem  
Bardez 403 509  
GOA  
Mobile : 96377 23424
23. Ms. Saroja Chodankar  
Mapusa Fish Market  
H.N. 662 Anjuna Badem  
Bardez 403 509  
GOA

**KERALA**

24. Ms. Stella Solomon  
Sthree Niketan Vanitha Federation  
Karunalayam, G H Road  
Thiruvananthapuram 695037  
KERALA

Tel : 0471 2304695  
Mobile : 95476 12602

25. Ms. Celin Milton  
Sthree Niketan Vanitha Federation  
Karunalayam  
G H Road  
Thiruvananthapuram 695037  
KERALA

Tel : 0471 2304695  
Mobile : 94866 51338

26. Ms. Sita Dasan  
SEWA (Self Employed Women's  
Association Union) SEWA-Union  
KRAD/51, Kuthiravattam Road  
Kunnumpuram  
Trivandrum 695001  
KERALA

Tel : 0471 2465007  
Mobile : 97449 84639  
Email : sewakerala@gmail.com

27. Ms. Anna Mary  
SEWA (Self Employed Women's  
Association Union) SEWA-Union  
KRAD/51, Kuthiravattam Road  
Kunnumpuram  
Trivandrum 695001  
KERALA

Tel : 0471 2476734  
Email : sewakerala@gmail.com

**ORISSA**

28. Mrs. P. Gauri  
Orissa Traditional Fishworkers Union  
(OTFWU)  
At.P.O. Puri Bali Nolia Sahea  
District Puri 752 001  
ORISSA

Mobile : 99833 65822

29. Mr. Alleya  
Orissa Traditional Fishworkers Union  
(OTFWU)  
At: Sana Arjapali  
P O : Bada Arjapali  
Via: Chatrapur  
Dist: Ganjam 761 020  
ORISSA

Tel : 06811 262286  
Mobile : 94370 69286  
Email : otfwu@hotmail.com alleyya.  
fishermen.kanda9@gmail.com

30. Mr. A. Ganesh Rao  
Orissa Traditional Fishworkers Union  
(OTFWU)  
Bali Nolia Sahi  
R.K. Road  
P O : Puri  
ORISSA

Tel : 06752 225335  
Mobile : 97770 37335  
Email : krane4king@yahoo.com

31. Mr. Ashish Senapati  
Project Swarajya  
Short Stay home, Near Collectorate  
At-Khadianga  
Kendrapada P O 754211  
ORISSA

Tel : 06727 233569  
Mobile : 98612 62342  
Email : senapatiashish@rediffmail.com

**WEST BENGAL**

32. Ms. Ratna Mahji  
Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF)  
Village Purusotampur (Purba)  
PO. Dadanpatrabar, Midnapur,  
P.S. Ramnagar,  
Dist: Purbamedinapur  
721 455  
WEST BENGAL

33. Ms. Kajal Bar  
Coastal fishvendors Union  
Village Uttarkrishnachawak  
P.O. Contai  
P.S. Contai  
District: Purbamedinipur  
WEST BENGAL

34. Mr. Debasish Shyamol  
Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF)  
Village Baguranjalpai  
P.O. Deshdatta Bar  
P.S. Contai  
Dist: Purbamedinipur  
WEST BENGAL

Mobile : 9933602808  
Email : debasis.shyamal@gmail.com

**GUJARAT**

35. Ms. Amina Ben Ghat  
Kutch Sea Food Producer Company,  
At.P.O.Vandi  
T.A. Anjar  
Kutch District  
GUJARAT

Tel : 02838 282445  
Email : bhadreshwar\_setu@gmail.com

36. Ms. Ranu Ben Gadhavi  
Ujjas Mahila Sangeetham  
At. P.O. Sadane  
Mundra Taluk  
Kutch District  
GUJARAT  
  
Tel: 02838 223104  
Email: umsmundra@gmail.com
37. Mr. Bharat Patel  
MASS  
At. P.O. Badreshwar - Village  
Badreshwar  
Mundra Taluk  
Kutch District  
GUJARAT  
  
Tel : (0) 2838 282445  
(0) 94264 69803  
Email : mass.kutch@gmail.com
42. Ms. Jyothi Meher  
Thane Zila Macchimar Sangha  
At & Post Satpati,  
Taluka Palghar,  
District Thane,  
MAHARASHTRA
43. Ms. Vaishali Bhagwan Khadape  
Mahila Machchimar Co-op. Society  
At & Post Tulsunde,  
Taluka Rajapur,  
District Ratnagiri,  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Tel : 02353 224363
44. Mr. Bhagawan Khadape  
Mahila Machchimar Co-op. Society  
At & Post Tulsunde,  
Taluka Rajapur,  
District Ratnagiri,  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Mobile : 94213 58937

**MAHARASHTRA**

38. Ms. Purnima Meher  
Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti  
Samittee  
At Wadarai Village  
Post- K. Mahim  
Palghar, Dt.  
Thane 401 404  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Tel : 02525 628036
39. Mr. Ramakrishna J. Tandel  
Maharashtra Machchimar Kruti Samitee  
Punyai, At & PO Kelwa,  
Tal. Palghar  
Dist: Thane 401 401  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Tel : 02525 646464  
Mobile : 98671 12468
40. Ms. Lalita Bharat Zulya  
Koli Mahila Mase Vikreta Sahakari  
Santha Ltd  
Arnala-Virar, Ganpati Road,  
Pujari Gili, At & Post Arnala,  
Taluka Vasai, District Thane,  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Tel : 02525 691935
41. Ms. Bhavika  
Koli Mahila Mase Vikreta Sahakari  
Santha Ltd  
Arnala-Virar, Ganpati Road,  
Pujari Gili, At & Post Arnala,  
Taluka Vasai, District Thane,  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Mobile : 96897 80830
45. Ms. Sonali Rohidas Adivarekar  
Mahila Machchimar Co-op. Society  
At & Post Tulsunde,  
Taluka Rajapur,  
District Ratnagiri,  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Mobile : 94213 58937
46. Ms. Jyoti Kiran Koli  
The Arnala Fishermen Sarvodaya  
Sahakari Society Ltd,  
Killa Road,  
At & Post Arnala,  
Taluka Vasai,  
District Thane 401302  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Mobile: 98817 74521
47. Mr. Ram Bhau Patil  
National Fishworkers' Forum  
AT: Wadarai  
Post: Kalve Mahim  
Taluka: Palghar  
Dist: Thane 401 402  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Tel : 02525 220133  
Mobile : 098928 33815  
Email : patil.rambhau@gmail.com
48. Mr. Ramesh Dhuri  
At Dhuriwada, Po. Tal. Malvan,  
Dist. Sindhudurg 416606.  
MAHARASHTRA  
  
Tel : 02365 252250  
Mobile : 9764594150



49. Ms. Kamini Koide  
Sagush Kanya Women Cooperative  
Society  
At Dundi, Aavar,  
Po. Tal. Malvan,  
Dist. Sindhudurg 416606.  
MAHARASHTRA

Mobile : 94212 63198

50. Ms. Ujwala Jaykisan Patil  
Maharashtra Machimar Kruti Samite  
C/410 Sagar Samrat,  
Machimar Nagar  
Behind Vivekanand Garden,  
Mahim  
Mumbai 400 016  
MAHARASHTRA

Mobile : 98671 11543

51. Ms. Shankuntala Ramesh Mahere  
Maharashtra Machimar Kruti Samite  
Mahim  
Mumbai  
MAHARASHTRA

Tel: 022 6504 6163

52. Ms. Lakshmi Bandakur  
Sagush Kanya Women Cooperative  
Society  
At Dundi, Aavar,  
Po. Tal. Malvan,  
Dist. Sindhudurg 416606.  
MAHARASHTRA

Mobile : 99605 11039

## RESOURCE PERSONS

53. Ms. Nalini Nayak  
Sadanand, ANRA 62  
Choola Lane, Anayara P O  
Trivandrum 695 029  
KERALA

Tel : 0471 2460081

Email : nalini.nayak@gmail.com

54. Mr. Mecanzy Dabre  
YUVA India  
Sector 7, Plot No. 2  
Kharghar,  
Navi Mumbai 410 210  
MAHARASHTRA

Tel : 022 2774 0999 / 90

Email : macdabre@gmail.com

## ICSF

55. Ms. Chandrika Sharma  
ICSF  
27, College Road  
Chennai 600 006  
TAMIL NADU

Tel : 044 28275303

Email : icsf@icsf.net

56. Mr. Dharmesh Shah  
ICSF  
27, College Road  
Chennai 600 006  
TAMIL NADU

Tel : 044 28275303

Email : deshah@gmail.com

57. Ms. Neena Koshy  
ICSF  
27, College Road  
Chennai 600 006  
TAMIL NADU

Tel : 044 28275303

Email : icsf@icsf.net

58. Ms. Ramya Rajagopalan  
ICSF  
27, College Road  
Chennai 600 006  
TAMIL NADU

Tel : 044 28275303

Email : icsf@icsf.net

59. Ms. Ojas  
Interpreter  
MAHARASHTRA

Mobile : 094035 79416

Email : meetojas@gmail.com

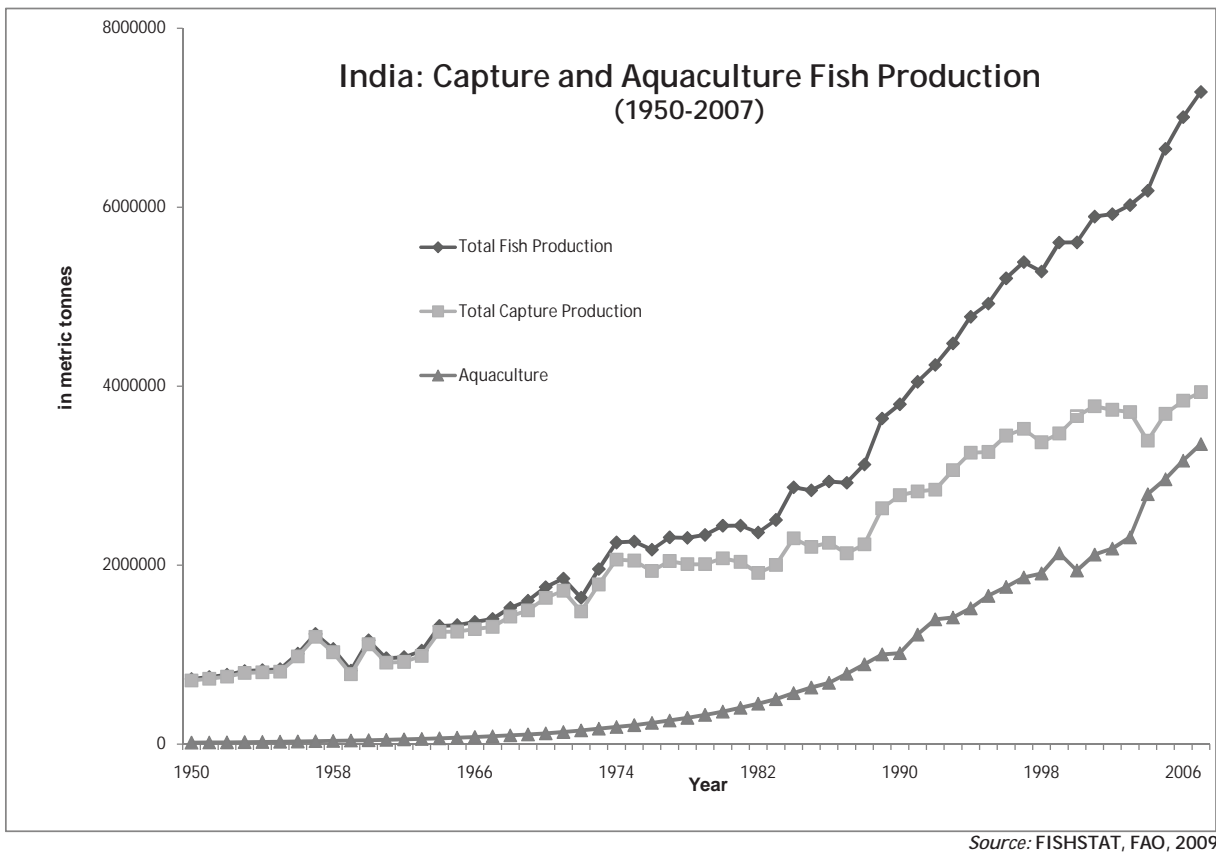
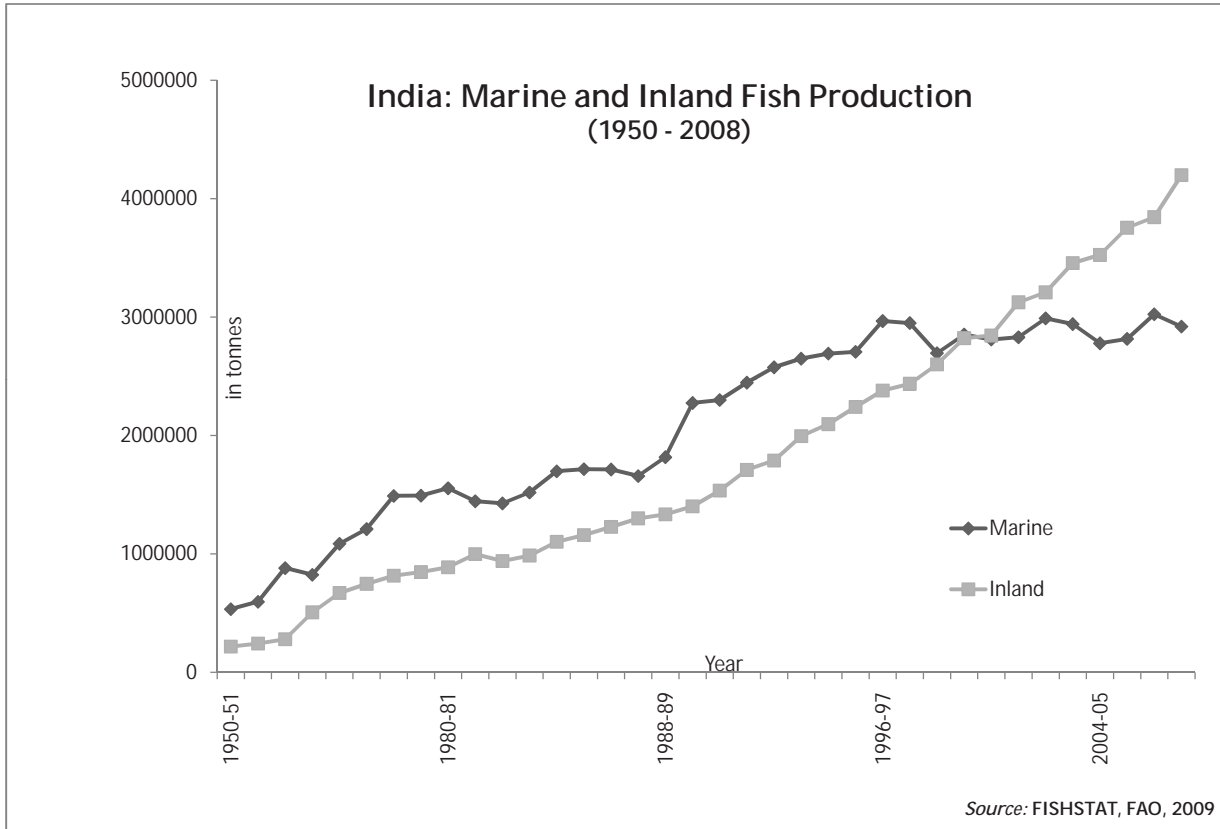
VENKATESH SALAGRAMA/ICM

Woman from the shoe-*dhoni* fishing community in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh

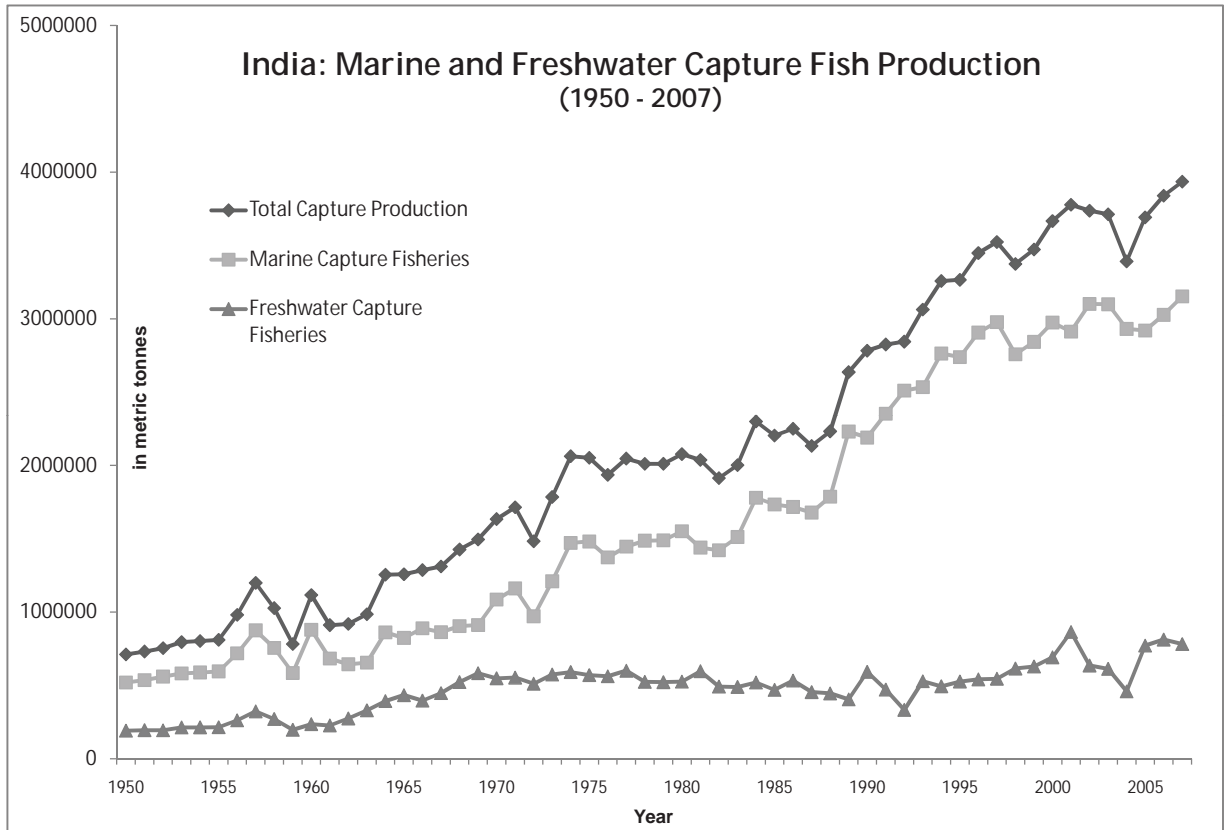


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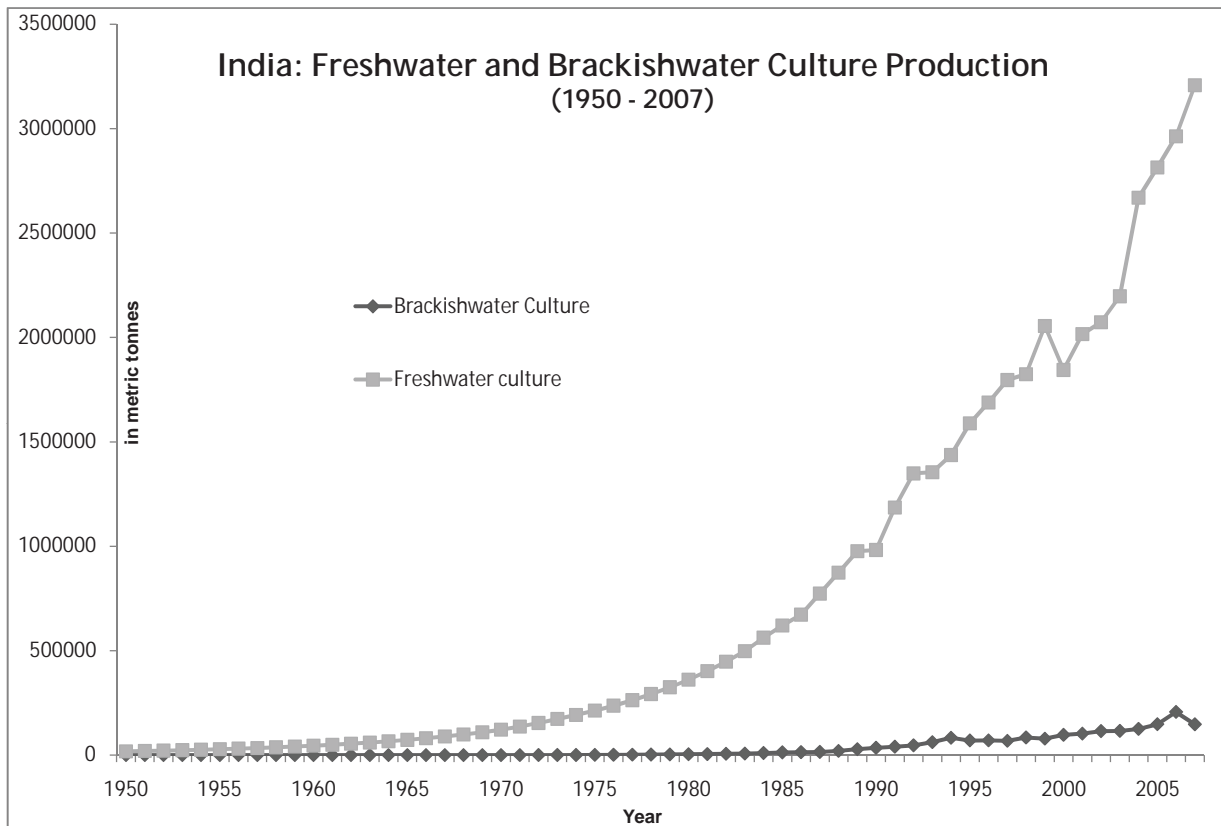
## Statistics on Fisheries Production, Trade and Fishing Communities



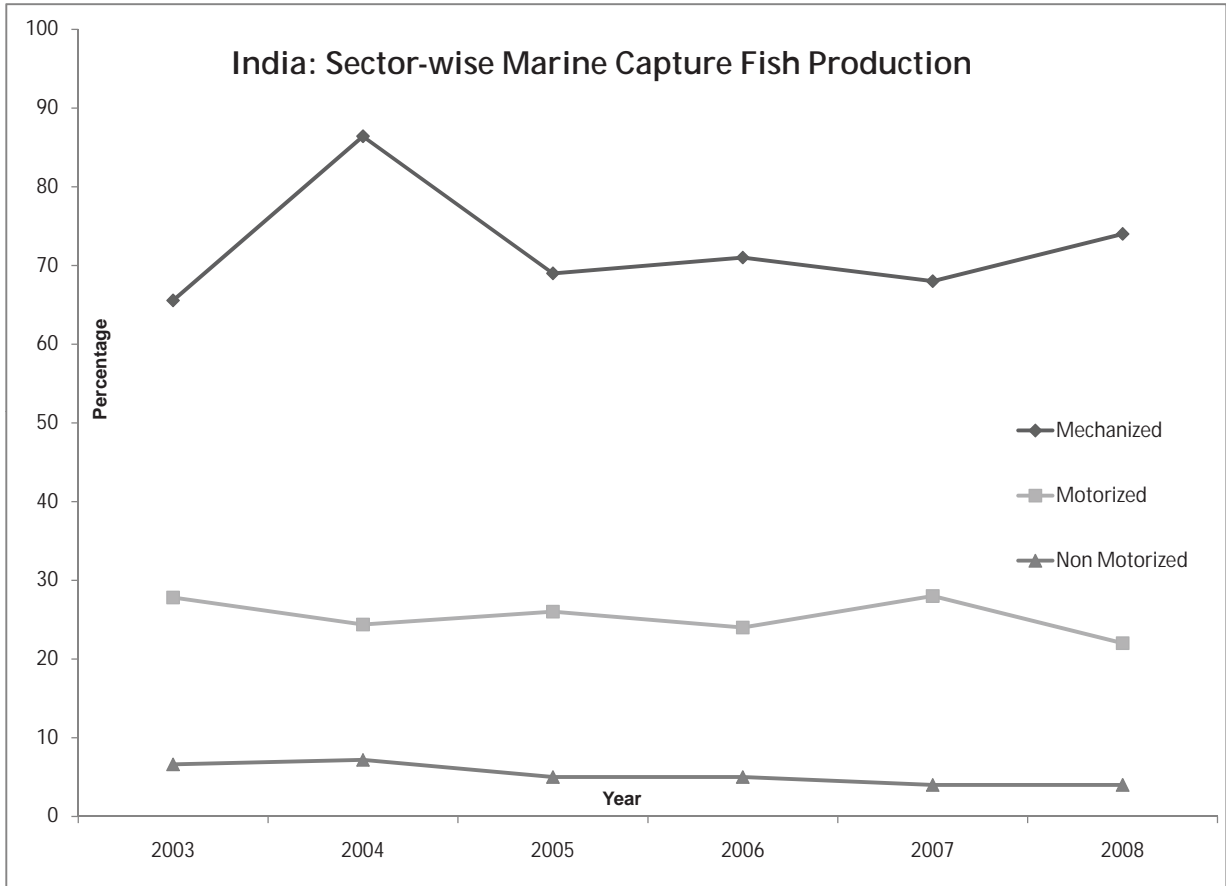




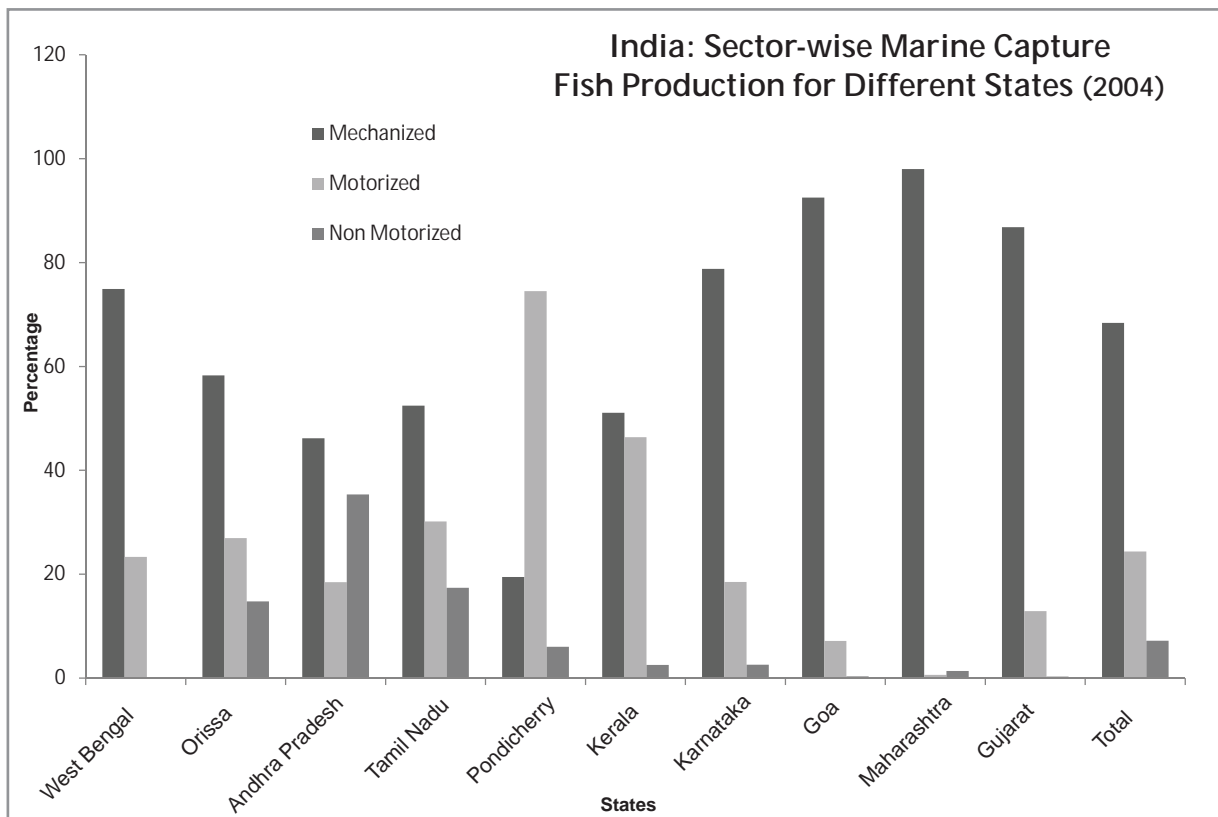
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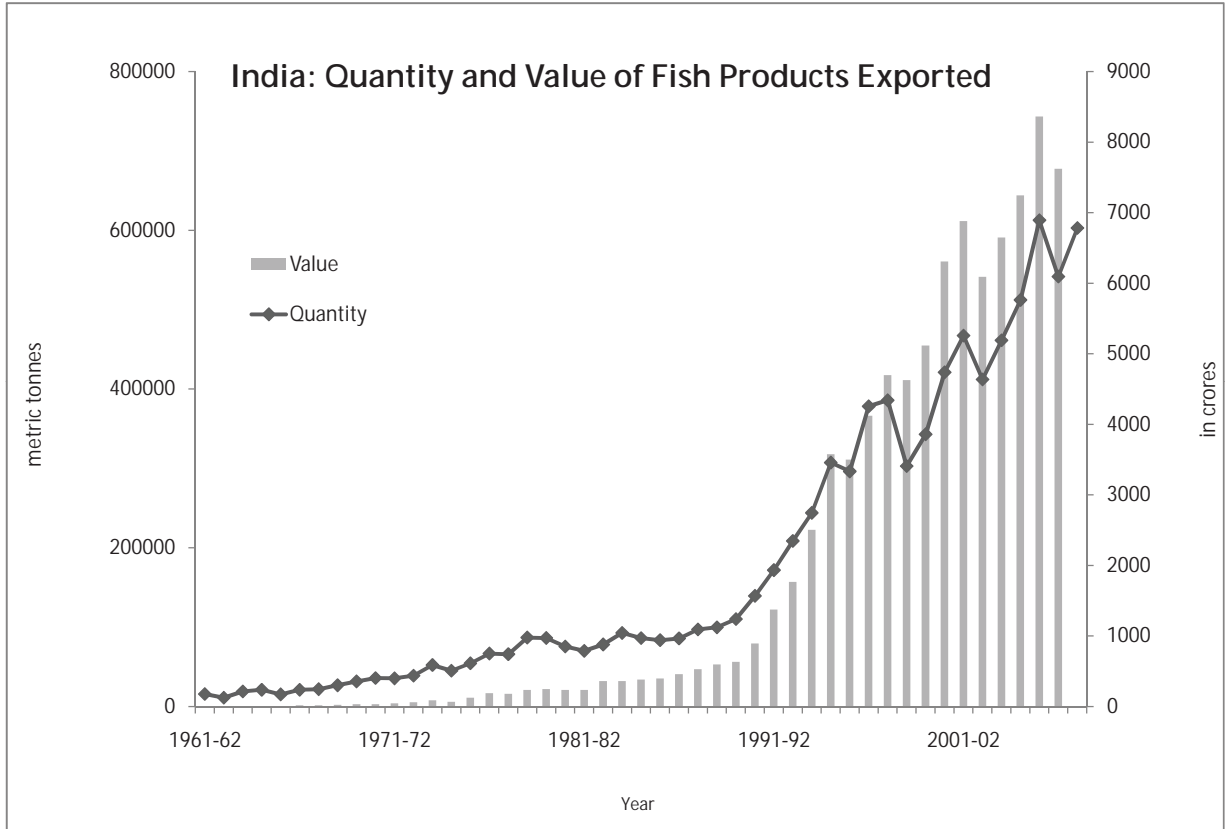
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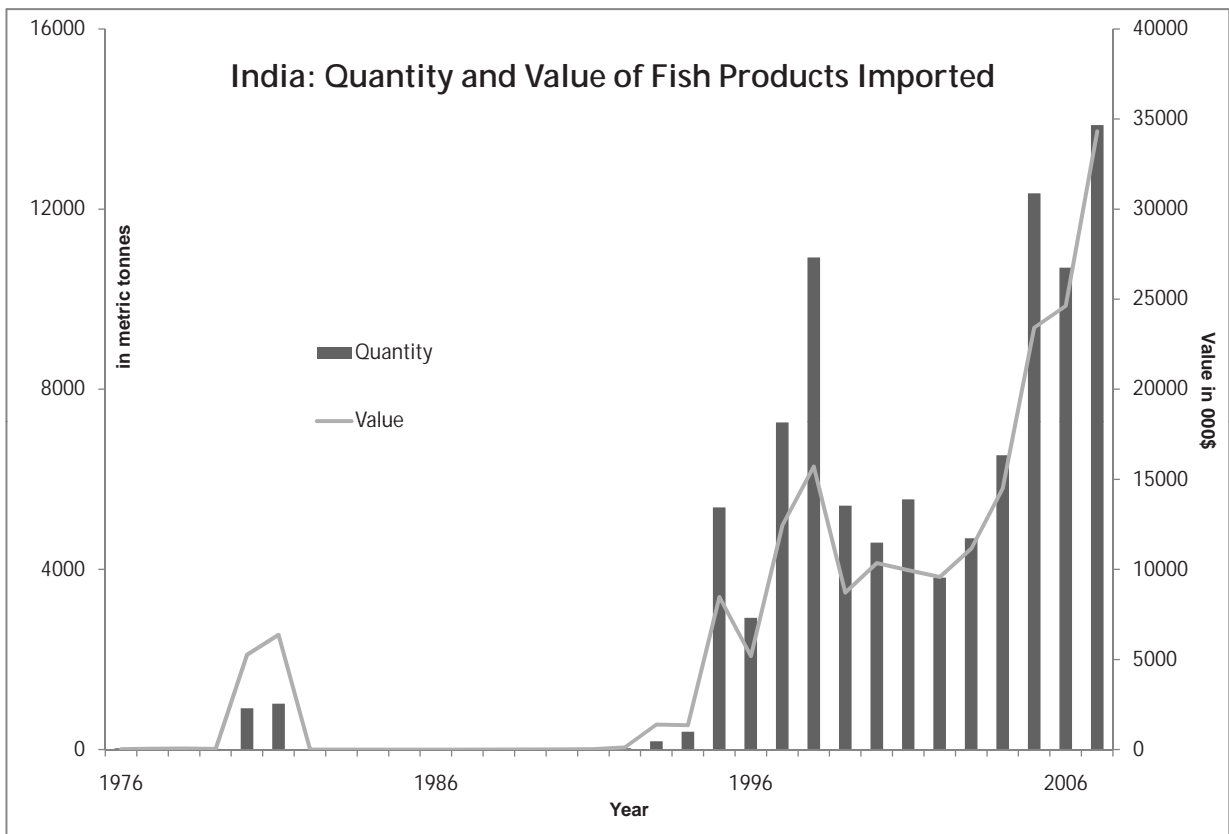
Source: Annual Reports of CMFRI (2006-07, 07-08, and 08-09)



Source: CMFRI Newsletter No.185 (2005)

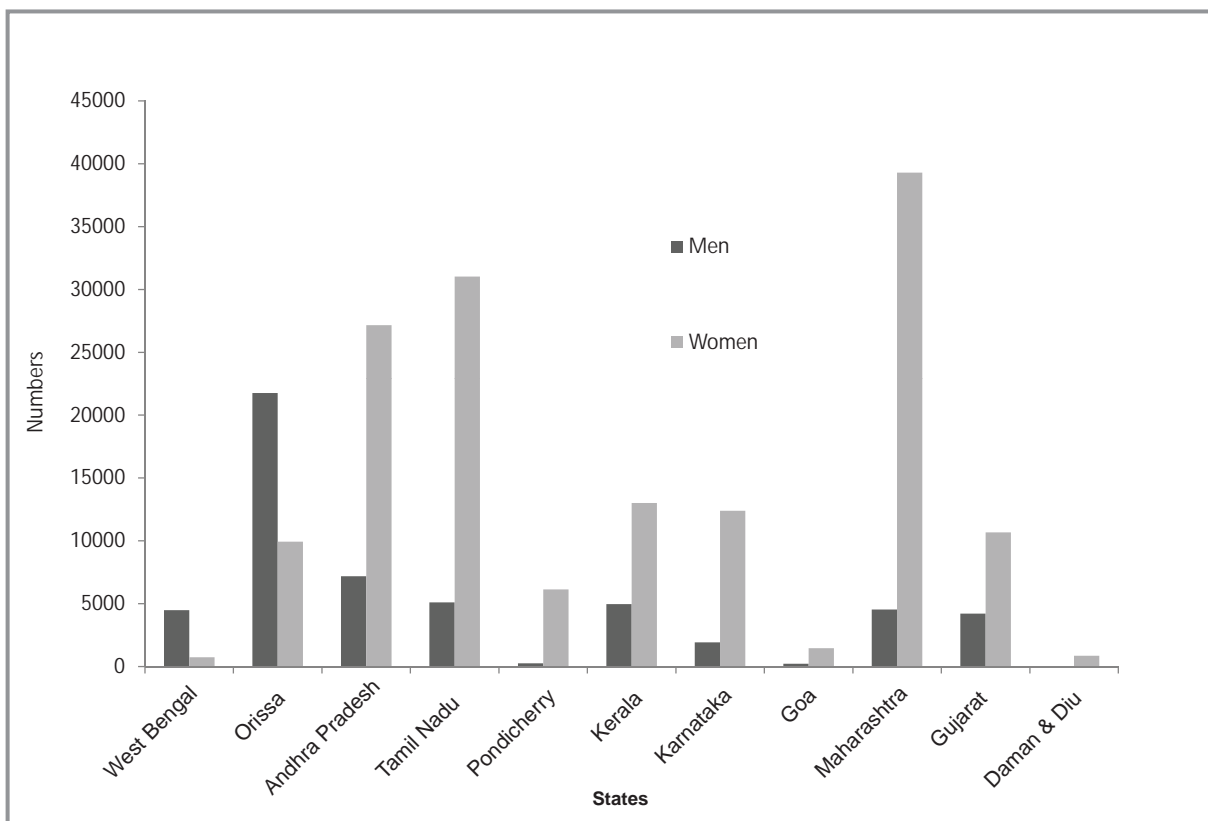


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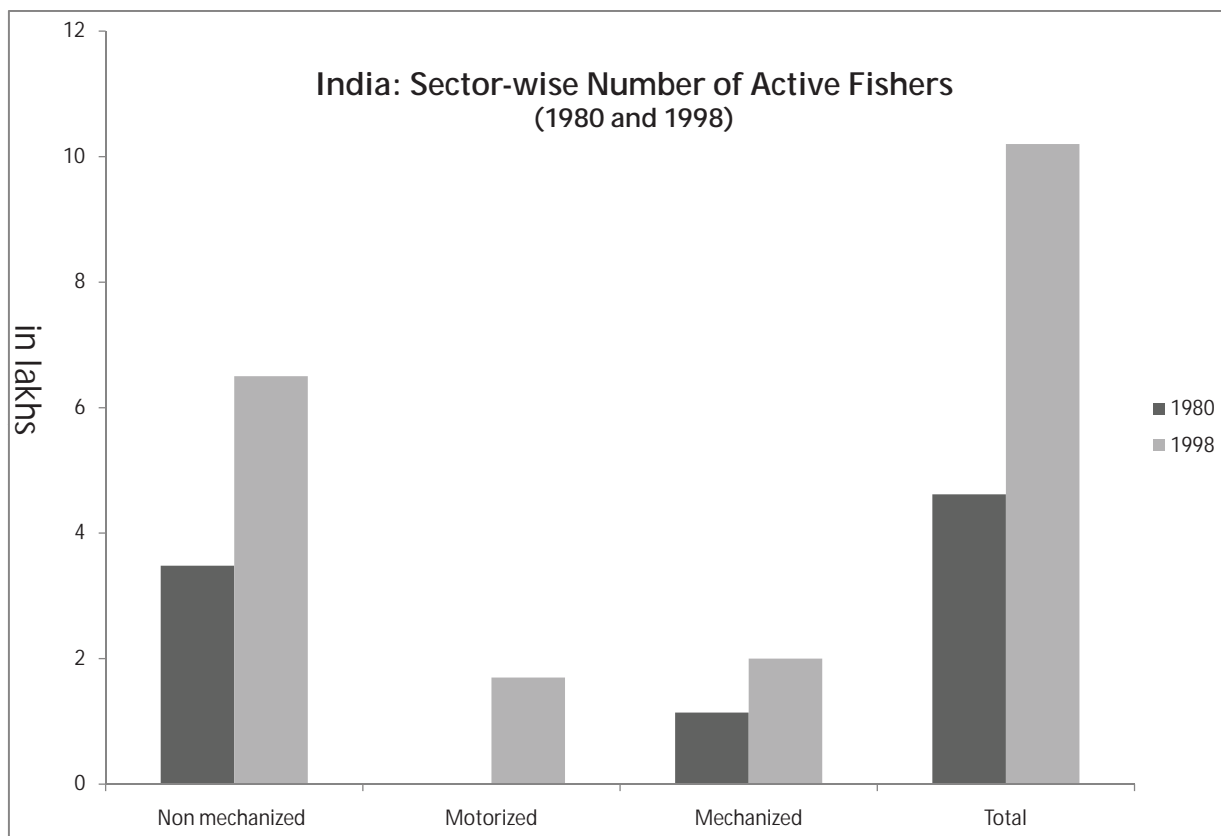


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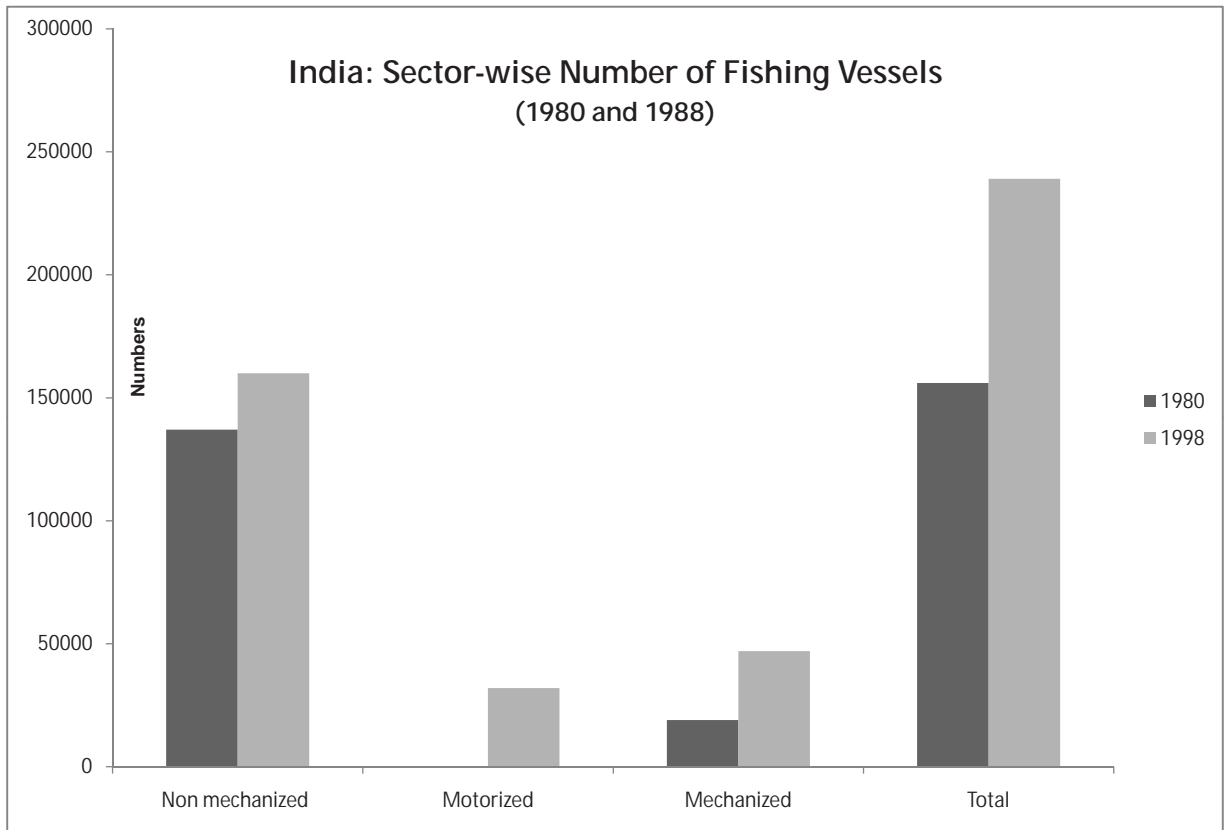




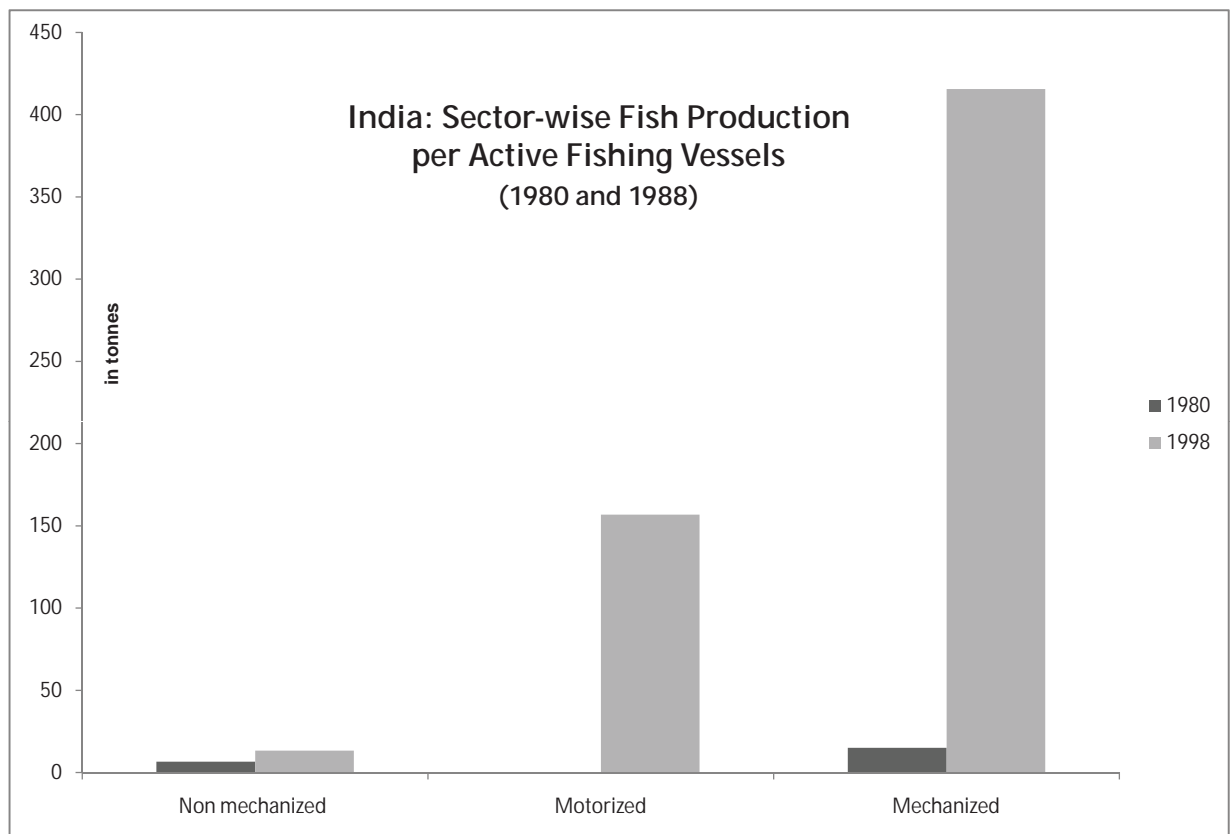
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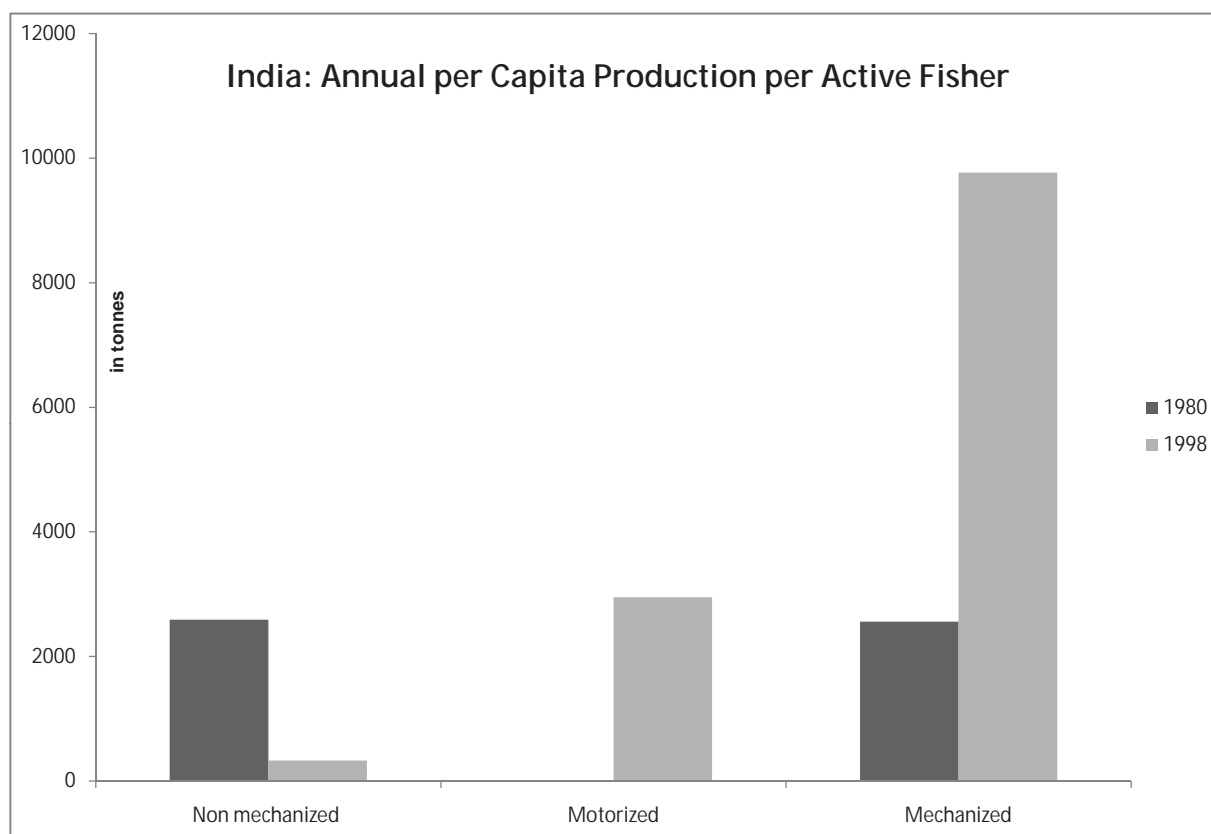
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Source: Sathiadas. R and Biradar R.S (2000). Fisheries in the Development of Indian Economy. In Sathiadas R and Venkateshvaran K (eds): Proceedings of National Seminar of Fisheries Economics, Extension and Management. January 5 and 6, 2000. CIFE



Source: Sathiadas. R and Biradar R.S (2000). Fisheries in the Development of Indian Economy. In Sathiadas R and Venkateshvaran K (eds): Proceedings of National Seminar of Fisheries Economics, Extension and Management. January 5 and 6, 2000. CIFE



Source: Sathiadas. R and Biradar R.S (2000). Fisheries in the Development of Indian Economy. In Sathiadas R and Venkateshvaran K (eds): *Proceedings of National Seminar of Fisheries Economics, Extension and Management*. January 5 and 6, 2000. CIFE



DHARMESH SHAH/ICSF

Fish vendor selling prawns at Visakhapatnam  
fishing harbour, Andhra Pradesh



## Appendix 4

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### Les femmes ne baissent pas les bras

L'atelier qui s'est tenu du 1 au 3 février 2010 à Mumbai sur le thème *Renforcer le rôle des femmes dans la pêche en Inde* avait pour objectif de réfléchir aux problèmes que connaissent les femmes des populations de pêcheurs, en tant que travailleuses et membres de communautés et d'organisations de la pêche, et aussi de partager les programmes d'action et les stratégies des unes et des autres, de faire le bilan des succès et des obstacles. Il s'agissait de sensibiliser les personnes à des politiques et des interventions importantes qui peuvent concerner les femmes de ces communautés, de développer les capacités des travailleuses de la pêche afin qu'elles puissent participer aux processus décisionnels qui affectent leur vie et leur moyens de subsistance et y faire sentir leur influence.

Il y avait en tout à cet atelier résidentiel 55 participants qui représentaient une vingtaine d'organisations et de syndicats des neuf États et Territoires côtiers : Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu et Bengale occidental. Il y avait là des femmes qui travaillent

directement dans la transformation, la vente et le commerce du poisson et qui sont organisées en associations, syndicats, coopératives, sociétés, groupes d'entraide. Il y avait aussi des personnes représentant des Ong d'appui. La plupart des gens présents étaient des femmes, avec quelques hommes appartenant à des syndicats ou des Ong.

Les choses étaient organisées de façon à faciliter les échanges et à inciter au débat malgré la grande diversité linguistique de l'assemblée : on y parlait en effet neuf langues différentes.

Cet atelier était peut-être une première pour beaucoup de ces femmes. Elles ont pu ainsi se familiariser avec des politiques, des programmes et des législations qui concernent leur milieu. Elles ont pu discuter de problèmes communs et de stratégies appropriées. Elles ont pu analyser leur vision d'une pêche qui, à la fois, assure la subsistance des gens et fait vivre les communautés. Cet atelier a également permis de resserrer les liens entre les divers groupes et de les aider à identifier des formes d'action adaptées pour mieux défendre la place des femmes dans la pêche et leur emploi. 3



NEENA KOSHY/ICSF

Fisherwoman selling small, indigenous freshwater fish species at Basanti village, Sundarbans, West Bengal



# Appendix 5

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## Seminario sobre mujer en la pesca en la India

**D**el 1 al 3 de febrero de 2010 se celebró en Mumbai un seminario titulado "Realzar el papel de la mujer en el sector pesquero de la India" con objeto de reflexionar en torno a los problemas de la mujer en las comunidades pesqueras en su calidad de miembros de las comunidades y las organizaciones y de compartir agendas y estrategias locales para la organización de las mujeres del sector, amén de pasar revista a los logros alcanzados y los obstáculos encontrados. El encuentro pretendía igualmente discutir y dar visibilidad a las políticas e intervenciones de interés para las pescadoras y aumentar su capacidad de participar e influir en los procesos de toma de decisiones que inciden en su vida y en sus medios de vida.

Al seminario, de tres días de duración, asistieron 55 participantes de unas 20 organizaciones y sindicatos procedentes de los nueve estados ribereños de la Unión India, a saber, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu y Bengala Occidental. La audiencia abarcaba desde trabajadoras de la transformación, la venta al por

menor y al por mayor, miembros de diversas asociaciones, sindicatos, cooperativas, compañías y grupos de ayuda mutua, hasta representantes de organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG) de apoyo al sector. Se trataba en su mayoría de mujeres, si bien también asistieron algunos hombres representando a los sindicatos y a las ONG.

La estructura del seminario facilitó la participación y la comunicación activa entre todos los asistentes, máxime teniendo en cuenta la diversidad lingüística de la audiencia, con nueve idiomas.

Se trataba probablemente del primer seminario en el que participaban muchas de estas mujeres. En él pudieron conocer políticas, planes y leyes que inciden en las comunidades pesqueras y discutir problemas y estrategias comunes. Tuvieron la oportunidad de explorar la pesca como sustento de las comunidades y de sus medios de vida. El seminario permitió igualmente tender puentes entre los diferentes grupos y buscar estrategias para proteger los espacios y los medios de vida de la mujer en la pesca. 3



## WIF INDIA WORKSHOP

### Enhancing Women's Roles in Fisheries in India

# Report

The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) organized a workshop titled "Enhancing Women's Roles in Fisheries in India" during 1-3 February 2010 in Navi Mumbai, India. The workshop was meant to discuss and analyze the role of women in fisheries, and reflect on issues facing women in fishing communities and organizations in contemporary India.

Not only did the workshop expose the participants to women's issues, organizational strategies, policies, schemes and legislation relevant to fishing communities, but it also stimulated discussions and exchange of views, which helped them explore a vision of a fisheries that sustains both communities and livelihoods.

The workshop strengthened the linkages between diverse groups, and helped them search for strategies to protect the spaces of women in fisheries and their sources of livelihood.



This report of the workshop will be of interest to women's groups, fishworker organizations, non-governmental organizations, researchers and policymakers working on fisheries issues.



ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-Governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO. As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns and action, as well as communications.