

# Report on Workshop on Enhancing Capacities of Women Fishworkers in India for the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines

## Report



21–23 November, 2016  
Ashoka Hall, Asha Nivas Social Service Centre,  
Chennai, India

Report prepared by Mariette Correa, ICSF



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



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Participants at the Training for Enhancing capacities of women  
fishworkers in India for the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines

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## List of Abbreviations

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ASHA	Accredited social health activists
BP	Blood Pressure
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CFS	Committee on Food Security
CIFT	Central Institute of Fisheries Technology
CMFRI	Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute
CRZ	Coastal Regulation Zone
CSO(s)	civil society organisation(s)
CTU	Central Trade Union
DADF	Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIMSUL	Fisheries Management for Sustainable Livelihoods
FSI	Floor Space Index
FWO(s)	fishworker organization(s)
GoI	Government of India
GPDP	Gram Panchayat Development Plan
GPS	Global Positioning System
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus; Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
LPG	Liquefied petroleum gas
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NGO(s)	non-governmental organization(s)
NFDB	National Fisheries Development Board
NFF	National Fishworkers Forum
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005
RTE	Right to Education
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SHG	Self-Help Group
SNEHA	Social Need Education and Human Awareness

SSF	Small-scale fisheries
SSF Guidelines	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
SC/ST	Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe
UN	United Nations
UPA	United Progressive Alliance



## Executive Summary

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The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) Trust organised a national workshop on ‘Enhancing capacities of women fishworkers in India for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines’ in Chennai, India, on November 21-23, 2016.

There were 63 participants from nine coastal states of India—participants from Gujarat could not attend. They were informed of the situation and role of women in India’s fisheries, as also the relevance of the ‘Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication’ (SSF Guidelines) to women in small-scale fisheries and the opportunities to improve their conditions. These Guidelines recognise:

- the importance of adhering to human rights standards and gender equality as fundamental to development;
- the vital role of women in SSF;
- the need to promote equal rights and opportunities;
- and the importance of encouraging women’s leadership.

Located within a human rights framework, the SSF Guidelines devote an entire section to gender quality, and another to the value chains that acknowledge the role women play.

Discussions highlighted the lack of facilities available to women in markets, their increasing inability to access resources, the lack of visibility of their roles, the fact that policies do not account for women in small-scale fisheries, the threats to their livelihoods due to pressures on land and coastal resources, climate change, and increasing inequalities. Social issues discussed relate to health, education, violence against women, housing, water and sanitation, social security, and human rights. Apart from participants sharing their experiences on all the issues, the challenges they faced, and their struggles and successes to overcome these, resource persons provided information on the legal frameworks and schemes at the national and state levels, as also the mechanisms to access these to help women in small-scale fisheries to promote their interests and protect their rights. All issues were located within a framework of human rights, in keeping with the SSF Guidelines. The history and perspectives on human rights were also highlighted. The future plans shared by the groups at the end of the workshop defined their priority areas for future action and were testimony to what they had learnt and absorbed over the three days.

Previously, in 2010, ICSF had organised a workshop on ‘Enhancing Women’s Roles in Fisheries in India’. That workshop had discussed and analysed the role of women in fisheries, and reflected on issues facing women in fishing communities in India. It had served to create awareness about key policies that were 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 2010 workshop adopted the Global ‘Shared Gender Agenda for Sustaining Life and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities’<sup>1</sup>. It noted that while women are an integral part of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and fishing communities, their work and labour continue to remain invisible, and that specific forms of discrimination cut across all aspects of women’s lives. The action plans and dreams highlighted in the Shared Gender Agenda were further used for including the gender equality and equity sections of the SSF Guidelines adopted by FAO in June 2014.

Prior to that, the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines, 2012, CFS) ask states to ensure equal tenure

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wifworkshop.icsf.net/en/page/855-reports.html>

rights for women and men, including the right to inherit and bequeath these rights; take measures to ensure that legal and policy frameworks and safeguards provide adequate protection for women, and that laws recognising women's tenure rights are implemented and enforced.

The current workshop was therefore proposed as a follow-up to the 2010 workshop, keeping in mind the opportunities presented with the Tenure and SSF Guidelines, changes in the last half decade for women in fisheries in India, the challenges they face in the current context of development and their attempts to overcome these. The workshop also took into account the gendered components of the subregional, regional and national-level consultations/meetings that have been held on the SSF Guidelines in the past couple of years.

The specific objectives of the three day capacity-building workshop were:

1. Reflecting on the SSF Guidelines, especially looking at the women in fisheries component of it, from the Indian fisheries perspective.
2. Focus on providing information on existing policies, schemes and legal provisions for women, and how they are being currently used by women in the fisheries sector.
3. Draw lessons and learnings from examples of actions that women have initiated in their respective areas.
4. Develop a holistic framework to life and livelihood in the small-scale fisheries, with a critique on the existing fisheries development.

A lot of preparation went into the workshop. Several months in advance, workshop participants were sent questionnaires regarding the situation of women in small-scale fisheries in their areas, their organisation profiles, successful campaigns undertaken as well as their expectations of the workshop. (See Annex 1: Questionnaire sent to participants.) The responses received were collated and informed the workshop content.

Material was also collected from state governments, particularly the fisheries departments, regarding the schemes they had for small-scale fishworkers, focusing on different aspects of the SSF Guidelines (housing, education, social protection, social security aspects, fish processing industries, work in fishing sector, human rights, discrimination issues, rural and urban livelihood aspects). Information was collected on the legal frameworks that are relevant to women in SSF in India, especially on social issues and within a human rights-based approach. All this material was compiled, translated into various Indian languages used in the coastal states of India and distributed prior to the workshop. Questions planned for the group discussions during the workshop were also translated into multiple languages.

Trips were also made to organise field visit for the participants during the workshop to certain sites, contacts were established and logistical arrangements laid down. On November 20, 2016, the day prior to the workshop, a meeting was held with the various group representatives to explain the purpose of the workshop and the need for good interpretation.

Apart from a few presentations giving the overview of the role of women in fishing in India and on the SSF Guidelines, much of the pedagogy adopted was group work and discussions in which participants could, in their own languages, share their experiences and strategies and then discuss these with the larger group. English was the common language and each group was accompanied by at least one person (from the fishing communities or an NGO working with them) to assist with whisper translation throughout the workshop.

# 1. Opening Session

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Day 1 started with a Tamil song sung by the fisher women delegation of Tamil Nadu recognising the skills and talent that women possess and exhorting women to stand up for themselves.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP. EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

*Nalini Nayak, ICSF Member*

Nalini welcomed the gathering, explaining that she would speak slowly to make things easy for the translators. She noted that it was International Fishworkers Day and we were celebrating 'our day' by getting together from all over the country. She asked participants to stand up for one minute to keep silence in order to remember all our sisters and brothers who probably died in the sea or who have died going to the market or who have died of old age as well as to remember a very dear friend in the activist movement, Y. David, who had died the previous night. She asked for silence to respect their lives and to thank God for their lives among us. She spoke about the long-drawn struggles of small-scale fishworkers, especially since 1986, which resulted in what we call the SSF Guidelines in 2014. It took almost 30 years of struggle of all the movements all over the world to finally get recognized at the international level. She explained that the three day workshop for which we had gathered was mainly to understand the SSF Guidelines. She asked the participants about their expectations from the workshop.

### Expectations

Participants from Goa and Karnataka responded saying that they did not want men from other states to sell in their local fishmarkets, as that disrupts the door-to-door sales of women fishworkers. Tamil Nadu participants said that there were powerful men from inside or from outside the harbour and the landing centres, who prevent women from buying fish, leading to conflicts. Women from Andhra Pradesh spoke of the large-scale displacement because of new activities coming up in the coastal areas, asking if there were any provisions for protection of their lives and livelihoods when big industrial projects cause displacement. The acute shortage of cold storage facilities was also discussed by Karnataka participants. It was noted that a lot of small business people were now selling frozen fish, as they had got small cold storages; therefore, the women fish vendors were not getting the appropriate price for their fish, as their customers were going to the small private outlets instead of buying from the local women vendors. Women from Tuticorin wanted to know more about seaweed collection, what their rights were to access seaweed and how to establish these rights. Participants also wanted to know how to deal with violence to which they were subjected within the family and by the State.

Women from West Bengal highlighted the issues of fisheries inside the forests of the Sunderbans. They wanted to know how to deal with the harassment meted out by the forest department, which prevents women fishers from entering the forest without a permit. Participants also felt that the government should stop giving all social security schemes and other facilities to non-fishers and have a special quota for small women fishers.

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND GROUPS

This session was divided into two (one in the morning and the other in the afternoon) in which participants from several states introduced themselves, and one representative from each organisation spoke briefly about their work. Groups from Maharashtra, Goa and Andhra Pradesh introduced themselves in the morning and the remaining states did so in the afternoon session.

### 1.3 WOMEN IN FISHERIES: THE CONTEXT

*Nalini Nayak, ICSF Member*

Nalini explained that in this session she would give some general information to get an understanding of the situation of women in fisheries in our country. She pointed out that the average size of a family in the coastal areas is 4.63 people, which is slightly less than the national average. The sex ratio for India, she explained, is 930 women for 1,000 men, though ideally it should be equal. However, in the fishing communities, it is even less at 928 females to 1,000 males. She asked participants to reflect on the reasons behind this.

In terms of education, generally in fishing communities, more men have gone to school than the women. In the fishing community, only 50 percent of the women have gone to school at different levels, whereas at the national level is 64 percent. She observed that while in Goa, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra, more girls from fishing communities were going to school, the situation in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat was very bad, with only 30 percent of girls being educated.

Nalini pointed out that Odisha, Maharashtra and West Bengal had good facilities, but these were not being used and that these issues would be discussed over the coming sessions. In terms of the housing situation in the fishing villages, she noted that only about 66 percent of families live in *pucca* houses (dwellings designed to be solid and permanent), figures that were slightly better than the national average. She said that the *pucca* houses are mainly in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Only 27 percent of coastal families had access to hospitals, while 88 percent had access to electricity.

With the help of diagrams and charts, Nalini then went on to explain the fluctuations in fish catch in the coastal communities from the year 1950 to 2014. She showed how, despite variations, the fish catch was increasing over the years. The same was true of inland fisheries and aquaculture, the latter increasing at very high rates. Again, with the use of graphs, she showed how much of fish is exported and how much is imported, pointing out that as the catch is increasing, more and more is being exported.

Putting it in perspective, she explained that our concerns that fish catch was decreasing was baseless; the lower access of women to fish for sale was not due to lower catch or the migrants from other states who were selling fish locally, but due to the big fish merchants from our own communities who were exporting these fish. She urged participants to reflect on these issues and understand the source of their real problems.

Following the general picture of fisheries, Nalini spoke about the diverse role of women in fisheries, saying that she did not have to go into detail as the participants were aware of the roles played by women including making gear, sorting fish, harvesting, working as labour, collecting seaweed, cockles, mussels, fish, processing and selling. She noted that the maximum number of women in small-scale fishing across the country were in marketing fish, selling fish or working as labour in fish related activity. Some women were engaged in auctioning or even in money lending or trading.

She said that while we discuss all the problems that women face in the fisheries, we also had to keep in mind that what was happening to us was also happening in the larger country. Whether we were fishworkers, farmers or street vendors, the poor were being marginalised and we needed to understand why this was happening. This, she said, was because most of the decisions in this society were made by very powerful men or by people who do not understand the struggles of the poor and do not understand why it is important that we first think of our food, before we think of money.

Nalini elaborated on the pressures on the coastal areas—targeted for the development of tourism, harbours, mariculture, nuclear plants and military installations—as well as increasing privatisation of the coastal areas, all of which were displacing fishing communities, threatening their lives and livelihoods. At the same time, the coast was being threatened by nature, with water rising due to climate change; hotter weather, more storms and typhoons.

However, Nalini pointed out that at a time when the situation seems bleak, we now had the SSF Guidelines since 2014. These Guidelines, accepted by 120 governments, actually support small-scale fisheries. She said that we would hear more about these Guidelines over the next few days; she called the guidelines a weapon to help us fight for our rights.

#### **1.4 INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ERADICATION (SSF GUIDELINES)**

*Sebastian Mathew, Executive Secretary, ICSF*

Sebastian introduced himself and then said that he would give an introduction to the SSF Guidelines. He informed the participants that copies of the SSF Guidelines in all Indian languages were available outside the meeting hall. He pointed out that it takes time to fully understand the SSF Guidelines and one may have to read it several times. He elaborated on the history behind the guidelines, stating that though they were adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization in 2014, work towards it started from a conference in 1984 when fishworkers from all over the world met in Rome and talked about the interests of small-scale fisheries.

One of the major milestones leading to the guidelines, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, was adopted by the FAO in 1995. The guidelines support the Code of Conduct which talks about conservation of fisheries, how people should conduct fishing operations, how to manage fisheries. He said that some of the gender dimensions and social dimensions are not sufficiently stressed in the code. These issues got highlighted at a major conference in 2008, which focused only on small-scale fisheries. Small-scale fishworker organisations from several parts of the world released a statement there, which influenced the process that led to the adoption of the guidelines.

SSF Guidelines try to establish the fact that we have to look not only at fish but also at what happens before fish is caught, what happens when fish is caught, what happens after fish is caught, as also who is catching it; what kind of relations exist between fishing communities, other people who use the coastal areas, or the riverbanks. These guidelines consider the social dimension of fisheries and post-harvest activities. This is being done by the SSF Guidelines through the adoption of a human rights-based approach.

In this context, he asked participants to remember that in 1993, when Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister, India had adopted a very important instrument called Human Rights Act, 1993, which defined a human rights-based approach. It talks about the right to life, liberty, equality, fraternity, and all the other rights which are in the international instruments that India has ratified. The SSF Guidelines, he explained, argue that you cannot separate various rights, that you have to see them all together—civil rights, political rights, economic rights, cultural rights, social rights—as a package. He said that there is an assumption that if one adopts a human rights-based approach, it would lead to the reversal of marginalisation of small-scale fishing communities, and ensure that their contributions were recognised. He spoke about the importance of understanding the concept of marginalisation, explaining that in the fishing ground, the small must not be displaced by the large. He noted that fishing communities need land for housing, to dry fish, to sell fish, for school, hospital, and recreational activities. He stressed that as a community we should be able to tell other actors who want to use these resources that ‘our interests should be fully protected when you do any type of intervention in these areas’.

Sebastian said that the key messages coming from the SSF Guidelines are consultation and participation. He told the participants that they should be consulted on any decision that affects their living space, work space or recreational space; that they should be able to participate, whether

at panchayat level, at the state level, or at the national level, so that they could actively engage with the government departments and elected representatives at various levels. Probably for the first time in any fisheries instrument, the SSF Guidelines recognise that men and women are equal partners in pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest fisheries activities. The SSF Guidelines say everybody has a role in their implementation—the government, small-scale fishers, fishworkers, civil society organisations, research organisations, institutions, academics who do research work and teach in universities, the private sector, and donor communities. They also state that anyone who engages with these activities (like building a road or building a power plant or building a factory near where fishing communities live) have to take into account the human rights of people living there. He said that Mahatma Gandhi had captured the human rights approach very well in his famous quote, “When you do anything, think of the smallest man and woman and how it is going to affect them, and if they are going to benefit, then do it.”

Sebastian spoke about how women would benefit from implementing the SSF Guidelines. He said that implementing these Guidelines could increase investment in health and education, in ensuring access to housing, sanitation, drinking water, social security measures; along the entire value chain, from production, processing to marketing. It could lead to improving access to savings, credit programmes, insurance schemes, alternative income-generating activities. He said the implementation of the SSF Guidelines could also lead to stopping any kind of unreasonable eviction of people from their villages, their communities. It could help build the social capital of the fishing community, as the guidelines talk about the need to develop professional skills of community organisations, to develop their own organisations which could then engage in any dialogue and be part of decision-making processes. The SSF Guidelines also talk about amenities like drinking water facility in markets, adult education facilities as well as the relevance of market information. This can help know where the fish is available, where one can get a better price for the produce or where the fish can be supplied to meet local needs or demand, if there is a major food-security type of issue in a state.

Referring to those engaged in fish processing or trade, Sebastian highlighted the importance of quality and safety of fish for sale, sustainability of fishing, minimisation of losses, value addition, responsible usage of inputs like fuelwood and water. He observed that climate change and economic inequality (the widening gap between the rich and the poor) are the two major issues in the 21st century that we have to engage with at various levels. The impact of climate change on the sub-sector, the fish processing sector, is also recognised in the SSF Guidelines, pointing towards how to address this. In this context he spoke about access to Climate Change Adaptation Funds and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. He informed the participants that the fund is for all sectors; in India NABARD deals with the fisheries sector and the fund should also be made accessible to people working in the post harvest sector.

Sebastian then spoke about the challenges in implementation of the SSF Guidelines as we had so many levels of government (local, state, national), several departments and ministries (like health, education, water supply, fisheries, post-harvest, trade or commerce) and different types of organisations (fishworker organisations, community organisations, trade associations). With so many levels and structures working, there is a crying need to work coherently, minimising clashes among various initiatives and efforts, if we want to achieve the objectives of the SSF Guidelines.

Finally, he said that to promote such a substantive bottom-up approach, the challenge was whether we could form state and national platforms to oversee implementation of the SSF Guidelines. He mentioned that at a meeting in Kolkata two months previously, the inland fishing communities had formed a national platform to look at the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and at water governance. With this interesting initiative coming from the inland sector, he urged that the marine sector also have some kind of national- and state-level platforms to strengthen the bottom-up perspective for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

## Discussion

Following both presentations, the floor was opened for participants who had questions or needed clarifications.

There was curiosity about what the Indian Government was doing or its initiatives regarding the SSF Guidelines. It was pointed out that a new National Marine Fisheries Policy was in the making. Three drafts had been circulated, each of which talks about implementing the SSF Guidelines. Responding to concerns about the lack of definition of small-scale fisheries, which had implications for claiming of rights, Sebastian said certain indicators are given in the SSF Guidelines regarding who are the vulnerable and marginalised. Combining that with the language of the Indian Constitution and determining the weaker sections in the fishing community who need better access to health, education, sanitation and market, it may be possible to develop a definition for both coastal and inland communities. He further explained that apart from fishing communities, there are other weaker sections in coastal communities who need protection, and that some of the benefits of the guidelines should go to them as well. (For example, setting up schools in inaccessible areas could benefit many people). It is important to have strong community organisations in order to decide who are the weaker sections. It was also emphasised that we should look at those who are weaker than us when we are making demands, instead of always looking at people who are better off or more powerful than us. Conflicts already arose regarding who should be small-scale, with motorised boats using high power engines wanting to be included in this category.

C M Muralidharan, ICSF member, added to the information provided by Sebastian on the National Fisheries Policy. He spoke about the Fisheries Management for Sustainable Livelihoods (FIMSUL) project of Tamil Nadu, which had recommendations for small-scale fisheries even before the SSF Guidelines were endorsed. He explained that there were components in Tamil Nadu which are likely to contribute to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. One was wide adoption of co-management (where fishermen and fisherwomen have the right to be involved in the planning and the decision-making of the fisheries, like which nets to be used, where to be used, which areas to be banned for fishing, which area to go for fishing, which season to be banned, how to handle fish, how to market fish, how to maintain the infrastructure in the harbour and landing centre, among other things); the other was the chance to enhance and diversify livelihood opportunities within the sector, especially the small-scale sector. In response, it was pointed out by Tamil Nadu participants that while communities were involved in the process of the FIMSUL study, research and finalisation of the report, they have not been involved in its implementation.

Other concerns expressed by participants was that saving-cum-relief, diesel subsidy and insurance are available only for men and not for women. In Odisha, when women have the boat in their name after being widowed, they do not get diesel subsidy. It was explained that all registered boats had a right to subsidy and if there was a subsidy in the state, then widows owning boats were entitled to it. The importance of registering boats was stressed, as also of forming strong organisations to claim these entitlements.

In Tamil Nadu, it was pointed out that the government does not provide relief for the lean season or banned season for households headed by women that are dependent on fish for pre-harvesting, fish catching (in Cuddalore) and fish processing. This was because the welfare boards were not functioning well and this was not limited to the fisheries sector. Again, the need for strong organisations and trade unions to agitate for the proper functioning of welfare boards was stressed. The lunch break was followed by a song sung by the Andhra Pradesh representatives. The self-introduction session continued of the other groups from the different states.

## SESSION 2: Presentation of Group Discussions on relevant areas in the SSF Guidelines

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### Group discussions preparation

*Mariette Correa, Senior Programme Coordinator, ICSF*

Mariette explained the modalities of the following session where participants would be formed into groups to discuss certain topics. Two hours would be given for the groups to discuss among themselves. The name of the state and the group were displayed on the screen (see annex 3 and 4 for group discussion members and topics respectively). She informed the participants that they would be given a set of questions translated into their respective languages. The questions would cover all the themes as mentioned in the programme sheets. She requested them to look at their agendas where all the topics were listed: Markets, Access to fish and resources, Housing, Water and Sanitation, Health, Education, Violence and Harassment, Social Security and Human Rights. She said that all the groups would get a set of questions with all the topics, but that each group needed to discuss only the specific three or four topics given to them.

Each group would have one or two persons to facilitate the discussions. Those names were put up in the last column of the table displayed (see Annex 3). Following the group discussion, each of the groups would present whatever they had discussed and the groups needed to decide who among them would present on the specific topics. For example, later in the evening, the topic 'Markets' was to be taken up. All the groups who were discussing markets—Groups 1, 2 and 3—would need to make brief presentations after the group discussions. After that, other participants could contribute or ask questions. The remaining presentations would be made the following day.

Mariette explained that the set of questions were just for guidance and that participants did not have to answer all, but could assess which questions were important or relevant to them and focus on those.

### Group presentations

It was explained that presentations on each topic would first be made by the groups, based on their discussion. After presentations on specific topics, the resource persons would add to what the groups had already shared, highlighting the legal provisions and the schemes.

### 2.1 MARKETS

*Resource person: Nikita Gopal, Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Kochi, India*

#### Group 1: Andhra Pradesh and Odisha

They said though there had been no displacement from markets, the sale of fish had been a problem due to the lack of facilities including drainage systems, storage systems, infrastructure, drinking water, electrical power and toilets. In order to better protect women's spaces in the markets, the group said that they wanted price fixation as was done in the farmers' markets by the government, so that there is some protection from daily market fluctuations. They also felt that co-management will help protect their market spaces. They suggested the establishment of retail outlets where they could sell fish, just like milk parlours where people can go buy milk. They also felt that education



was important as well as safety and security against theft and violence. Finally, they suggested that the state and NGOs could provide education and awareness on issues/ problems and market linkages.

## **Group 2: Goa and Maharashtra**

Regarding market displacement in Maharashtra, Ujwala Patil spoke about the situation in Mumbai, which had 61 retail markets under the municipal corporation. She said that the issue of displacement came up whenever there were discussions about policy regarding redevelopment of markets. She spoke about the attempts to convince women to move away from the markets and notices issued to the women to vacate. The union took up the issue of the women, approaching the Commissioner of Fisheries with the demand to let the women continue to sell at the same location, irrespective of whether the markets were being repaired or redeveloped. This was the first relocation move that they managed to resist. She informed participants that their organisation managed to fight against the order for the redevelopment of the wholesale market in Mumbai, where fish came in bulk from different states and sold. Regarding the 61 retail markets in Mumbai, which belong to the municipal corporation, she said that women have been sitting there for the past 150 years, but did not have a licence, which the government is now making mandatory for any redevelopment and allocation of space in the market. Women have been refusing the licence, saying that this is their space.

Consultation processes towards redevelopment have excluded the women and, in fact, involved male vendors who have come into the markets very recently, selling vegetables and food items. The unions fought this, demanding that the women need to be involved as they have first rights to the market. After a ten-year struggle, the redevelopment policy has been formulated; it takes into consideration most of the women's demands, including that women should be involved in any future redevelopment and that market redevelopment rights should also be given to the women. These struggles also led to the formation of registered women's associations. The union has also raised the issue of FSI, since a market has been redeveloped into a three-storey building and the corporation was giving the women limited space, using the rest for offices. Similarly, the union has been using the Mumbai policy of slum rehabilitation to fight for more space for themselves in the markets. This has meant knocking at the doors of several government departments. She explained in detail each step of their struggle and how it is an ongoing challenge.

Ujwala also shared her experiences in advocating for a model market in Mapusa, Goa, which did not succeed, though space was allocated to the women vendors. The government finally did not take the opinion of the vendors selling there and developed the market in such a way that it is no practical use to the people selling there. Maintenance costs have increased, vendors have to pay for the cold storage that has been made available, and there is no maintenance of the cold storage temperature.

She then spoke about the importance of getting involved in the formulation of the city development plans. Giving the example of Mumbai, where they mapped the street vending sites and 40 markets, she said it was necessary to establish these sites so that fish vendors can protect these spaces in the future in road widening or redevelopment projects. Based on her experience in Mumbai, she urged participants to get the development plans from the corporations and to engage with them through regular meetings to ensure that they recognise the importance of the markets even when cities expand and to uphold the rights of the street and market vendors.

Nikita Gopal emphasised that what was done in Mumbai is needed in other places and that it was important to speak in one voice and continue with the struggle without giving up. She said that

what is being achieved in Mumbai should be implemented in every state when a new market or a model market is being set up so that the voices of the women are heard as they have the practical experience and that their needs are incorporated into the policy during redevelopment.

### **Group 3: Kerala**

Philomena from Kerala said that even though over the years it was only women who used to sell fish in the markets, there was now a conscious effort to displace them. The prime locations in the markets which had high paying customers were being taken over by men and the women were being pushed to the back of the markets where they were not so visible. Women were finding it increasingly difficult to get fish from the landing centres and had to travel to far off places like fishing harbours to source fish that is far more expensive. They are dependent on iced/ frozen fish from other places for retail. Further, while vegetable sellers and others were getting secure places for selling their products, the fish vendors had to sit in the open in the sun or rain. They had no drainage, toilet, water, or basic facilities in the markets, no storage facilities to keep the fish left after the sales. She stressed that when the local bodies are developing the markets, they should take into consideration the requirements and needs of the women and make it women-friendly. She rued the lack of regulation in the markets, giving the example of labour for loading-unloading in the market, which went beyond their wages and on whom the women were dependent. She felt that there should be more awareness among the women vendors themselves about their issues and that they should organise better so that they could fight for their rights.

### **Discussion**

Following the presentations of the three groups, participants were invited to ask questions or share information. Tamil Nadu participants confirmed that they face similar problems. They have been demanding specific timings for women to get fish from the landing centres, rest rooms and storage facilities in the markets, credit facilities to registered organised groups. Many dry fish vendors are unable to succeed due to the inadequate credit facilities. Further, the traditional panchayats, along with the export companies, were preventing women from entering markets.

Goa participants said crèches should be made available at the markets.

Nikita Gopal, who facilitated this session, spoke briefly about the schemes of the government at the national and state levels. She said that people should be aware of the schemes, rules and regulations, and come together and organise in order to demand that the schemes are implemented. The Mumbai example showed how important it was to organise and continue to fight and struggle till demands were met.

She spoke about the various laws that can help. These include: the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, which gives street vendors the right against eviction; the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008, which includes old age pension and family benefits; the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993; the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. She also mentioned the National Commission for Women Act, 1990; the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, 1993, and the Right to Information Act, 2005. She said that there were many constitutional and legal rights, of which we are not aware. She stressed it was not enough for just one or two people to know about these; everyone needs to understand and decide together what they want.

Nikita then spoke about the specific schemes under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DADF) under the Union Ministry of Agriculture. These provide for development of retail fish markets, assistance to artisanal fishermen, insulated box for ice holding,

ice plant or cold storage, mobile fish outlet. She mentioned agencies like NABARD and NFDB, the latter having several schemes under which credit and funds were available. She referred to the booklet prepared by ICSF, in which the state-wise list of schemes was given.

Finally, she gave an example from East Godavari district, in which 20,000 women have been federated under one group and 1,700 SHGs have been formed; it's called the Godavari Maha Samakhya. They have many activities, including a big fish drying facility with substantive funds, and is supported by the state. She reiterated the importance of having a single federation, and not hundreds of small groups.

Day 1 ended with announcements made regarding the logistics for the field trips the following day to Royapuram, Saidapet and Chintadripet fish markets.

Day 2 began with a song by Maharashtra participants. Session 2 continued from where it had been left

Mariette informed the group that some changes would be made to the programme. The day would start with a session on Human Rights and the rest of the sessions would continue as planned. Short documentary films would be shown in the afternoon or evening, if time permitted.

Due to paucity of time, she said that only one group would be called for each topic and others could add specific information about their states. She apologised for the lack of time to discuss feedback from the field visits and requested the groups to share information about their visits during the tea and lunch breaks. This was followed by a song by the Kerala participants.

## 2.2 HUMAN RIGHTS

*Resource persons: Nalini Nayak and Mariette Correa*

Nalini introduced the session, asking participants what human rights meant to them, given that they were informed the previous day that the SSF Guidelines were based on a human rights perspective. Participants responded saying that all basic needs like food, clothing, livelihood, residence are included in human rights, to which all people were entitled.

Nalini explained that the rights we enjoy resulted from long struggles and that there still are many who do not have these rights. She noted that inequalities in society due to class, caste, gender and religion are taken for granted, and have become the norm. Emphasising the disparities that exist in India, where being part of religious minorities limits groups from practicing their religion openly and fairly, she told participants to not take human rights for granted. There have been struggles all through history to get rights for different groups of people, the initial ones being against slavery, since that was a problem in different forms across the world where the rich and powerful owned labour as slaves. She asked participants whether we still had that situation in India where people own their labour. Participants responded with examples of where that type of system existed in terms of bonded labour.

Nalini then went on to explain the various steps that were taken through history to achieve human rights that we enjoy today. She said that the first struggles were for individual freedoms and rights, where for example, individuals now have the right to speak, to move from one place to another, and the right to own property. She explained that decisions regarding what constitute human rights are made by the United Nations. Despite these decisions being taken, she pointed out that individual countries take time to permit these rights in their countries. Giving the example of the right of women to vote, she said that the USA and the UK did not give women the right to vote till recently, much after India had this right. She said that workers then got rights once the right to form trade unions was considered a human right by the United Nations, and that all governments have to accept that workers can form trade unions.

Later, she pointed out, customary rights were granted. She explained this with the example of the Koli communities, which have rights to the land where they have lived for generations and from where they therefore could not be displaced, even when Mumbai grew. The British also accepted these customary rights. The same argument was used by the women fish vendors to protect their markets in Mumbai, where they have sold fish for over 150 years. Nalini explained that the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, was passed based on customary rights following the struggles of street vendors in Gujarat who showed that they had used their space for 100 years and could not be moved. The issue went to the Supreme Court and the vendors won.

She then went on to talk about the various rights in the sea, noting that in some countries there are regulations on the fishery determining how many fish could be caught. In the Western world, the right to fish is an individual right. But in India, small-scale fishers have been fishing for generations, so the demand was not for individual rights, but for community rights in the zones that belong to these communities. Therefore, even in the sea, there were discussions on the types of rights that are being demanded—individual versus community rights.

She observed that in the Western world, everything is based on individual rights, but in the Asian world many common properties exist—like the forest and the sea. Groups are therefore trying to fight for the rights of all, though in the global context there was an increasing emphasis on individual rights. She asked participants to reflect on human rights in this context, and understand the importance of struggling for the rights of all rather than the individual.

Discussing an issue directly relevant to the participants, she said many in India belong to caste groups of fishworkers. There are groups that believe that the sea, the water, and the right to fish should be only for that particular caste. However, she pointed out, there is a lot of inequality even within these castes, with some continuing to benefit and becoming powerful at the cost of others. She urged participants to tread with caution when they asked for caste-based rights or privileges.

Though the right to equality and livelihood are guaranteed by the constitution, Nalini concluded, we are far from achieving these. The SSF Guidelines are all about the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised communities in small-scale fishing; the document supports our struggles and we should be able to use it in our work.

Mariette then proceeded to talk about the human rights that the SSF Guidelines refer to, after which she said she would elaborate on the rights given by the Indian constitution. She said that it would be important to then look at the gaps between what the SSF Guidelines included and what was available to us in India, so that we could fight for rights that were not already available to us.

The SSF Guidelines talk about:

- the right to adequate food,
- the right to legitimate tenure rights,
- the right to access fisheries resources,
- the right to the land near the fisheries, for processing and for housing, customary rights,
- the right against forced eviction or displacement,
- the right to participate in the management of the fisheries,
- the right to an adequate standard of living (includes housing, water and sanitation and sources of energy),
- the right to decent work and labour rights,
- the right to protection from physical and sexual violence,
- the right to equal access to social security and services such as savings, credit and insurance,
- the collective rights of women, indigenous people like adivasis, caste groups, SC/ST groups, migrants and other vulnerable or marginalised groups.

The SSF Guidelines say that we should give special support and development to all these groups (for women, adivasis, migrants) to develop their associations/unions/cooperatives related to market access, benefits from trade, and access to information.

She went on to talk about what the Indian constitution provides, relevant to women in SSF. She spoke about the right to equality, prevention from discrimination, the right to practice an occupation of one's choice, to be fishworkers, implying that the government has to create an environment where people are able to practice their occupations. The right to life includes several other rights. Giving some examples, she explained the difference between fundamental rights and directive principles, explaining that in the latter case, the State needed to follow these when formulating laws or policies. The State, for example, needed to provide maternity relief and ensure that the situation of public health is improved. She mentioned the Panchayati Raj Act and elaborated on the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, which she said had also been translated into different languages and were in the set of materials given to participants.

The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, covers all rights guaranteed by the constitution. Failure to prevent violations is also included in this, for example, if police are not protecting people during displacement. Complaints of violation of these rights could be sent to the National Human Rights Commissions and the state human rights commissions. Procedures for these complaints were distributed in the handouts. Similarly, the National Commission for Women and the state commissions for women could also be approached. She stated that when human rights were being violated it was easier and cheaper to approach the commissions than the courts. Groups should advocate for the commissions to be strong and respond to community needs. She gave the example of the market conditions which may prevent women from maintaining an adequate standard of living. The commissions could be approached to carry out research or investigations on the issue and/or even take up the matter with the police or the courts.

She briefly spoke about the National Food Security Act (2013) or the Right to Food Act, which brings together various other schemes of the government. She highlighted the section on 'Revitalisation of Agriculture', which could be interpreted to include fisheries. One provision in this section is prohibiting unwarranted diversion of land and water from food production. She informed the group that this section could be used when coastal lands were being taken away for development projects, claiming that, as fishing communities, our right to food and livelihoods are being threatened when land and water is being taken away for tourism, ports and nuclear plants.

The Constitution (Seventy Third Amendment) Act, 1992, (popularly known as the Panchayati Raj Act), has 50 percent reservation for women; it provides a large space for women to plan for the development of their communities. The Right to Information Act, 2005, is a powerful tool to access government information. She gave examples of the kind of information that can be obtained and the procedures involved in getting the information. For instance, if one suspects that a scheme is being misused, one can ask for the list of beneficiaries under the scheme or other information related to the scheme.

Lastly, she mentioned some schemes of the Central Government and requested participants to ensure that their respective states also implemented these schemes. She spoke about the Sukhanya Samridhi Scheme or the Girl Child Protection scheme, which was implemented in Andhra Pradesh, and the Laadli Laxmi Scheme, implemented in Goa and Madhya Pradesh, as well as a recent scheme to give free LPG connections to BPL families.

*A documentary film was shown on the mangrove forests of Sunderbans in South 24 Parganas in West Bengal and the struggles of the local canoe fisherwomen.*

## 2.3 ACCESS TO RESOURCES, FISH

*Resource person: P.S. Swathi Lekshmi, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi, India*

### Group 4: Tamil Nadu

Kaliyammal, speaking on behalf of central Tamil Nadu participants, said that traditional lands and fishing rights are no longer with the fishing communities. Earlier the government had a regulatory role ensuring, to an extent, the tenure rights of local communities. But now the state has become the owner of these resources. Fisherfolk are increasingly being evicted from their residential and livelihood areas through housing schemes and slow urbanisation processes. Even when new houses are being allocated to them in new settlements, they do not get legal entitlements to these houses, making them vulnerable. Since coastal lands are under the control of the forest department or maritime boards, they are able to give out the land on long leases to private companies or other interests, depriving fishing communities of their traditional rights over these lands. She gave the example of a village in Cuddalore district being prevented from accessing a burial ground; a right they got back after a long struggle.

Seaweed collection and crab catching require identification cards, which are obtained after a process involving three departments, making it difficult for women to acquire these. Women can no longer access areas they traditionally used for drying seaweeds, as well as the islands where they stayed while collecting seaweeds, which have been banned for human entry.

In terms of fisheries resources management, she said, the biggest problem was the mechanised boats or mother boats, since they take the largest overall catch. The different ban periods across states increased mobility of fishers between states and create conflicts. Fisheries resources management was also becoming challenging due to the use of banned nets, excessive numbers of fibre boats and fishing using explosives. Due to all this, the livelihood resources for small-scale fishers have been drastically reducing.

Regarding village-level management mechanisms, she said there was no possibility for women to have spaces. Attempts were therefore made to form district-level women's organisations, which have helped women negotiate for some spaces. She said that storage facilities in fishing harbours are almost non-existent, making price fixing very difficult. In order to improve women's participation in resources management, there should be a policy in place where women would be the first vendors. She gave the example of a village in Tamil Nadu where a decision was taken that all the fish caught by the village would be sold to the women first, after which it would go to the market. As fisherwomen, she said that when asked what alternative livelihoods we want if fishing resources deplete, we do not have an answer. She stressed that they believed fishing resources should be maintained and enhanced, instead of fisherpeople having to resort to an alternate livelihood.

Finally, she listed a set of demands that the group had discussed. One was that the price for fish should be determined by the fisher people. FDI in retail marketing should be banned, because big companies and chains come in with a lot of products directly affecting fish sales. Fish imports should be banned since India is a peninsular country. Higher tax should be levied on big vessels, like deep sea fishing companies; the tax levied should be used for welfare schemes for fisher women and that should be implemented through the existing local government institutions. A separate law should be enacted where fishers have customary rights over fishing resources and coastal land.

Following the group presentation, the facilitator for the session, Swathi Lekshmi elaborated on access to resources. She spoke about the modifications to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, amended in 2002 and 2006, for designation of protected areas like national parks and sanctuaries,

the banned species from the year 2000. She highlighted the issues of the national parks and sanctuaries in the Gulf of Mannar and Sundarbans. She explained that the Gulf of Mannar has been declared a national park, which means no act of human interference is allowed and that only conservation of resources was stressed. However, she said that seaweed collection by women was considered negligible by experts and did not pose a threat to the environment. According to experts, when women pick seaweeds they should ideally leave 2 cms of the stem so that vegetative regeneration is possible. Almost 5,000 women are dependent on seaweed collection in the Gulf of Mannar having huge implications if this activity is banned. An alternative presented was seaweed culture. She gave the example of Kanyakumari, where women have started seaweed culture using a 'raft' method (floating logs tied together).

Whereas no human interference is allowed in national parks, a limited number of human activities like grazing and fishing are allowed in sanctuaries, as long as these are non-commercial. She explained the rights of communities in national parks and sanctuaries and that prior to declaring an area as a national park, sanctuary, the collector has to assess the existence, nature and rights of people living in those areas; their livelihood needs, the rights over natural resources, how long they have been living in those areas, among other things. Declaration of areas as sanctuaries should not block passage of fishing boats. Occupational rights and livelihood interests of communities living in areas which are going to be declared national parks and sanctuaries should be settled two years from the date of first notification, prior to declaring the areas as protected, and measures need to be taken to protect the occupational interests of these communities. Alternatives should be made available where necessary, if people were dependent on fuel, fodder and forest produce.

According to the Act, the state should consult with local communities of any area prior to its declaration as a national park or a sanctuary. However, participation of the communities ends once the area is declared protected. She elaborated on specific provisions of the Act which prevented or allowed fishing communities to carry on their activities. Swathi Lekshmi then elaborated on the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, which calls for the conservation of resources and the equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of these resources. The SSF Guidelines also call for resource conservation. There is a corpus fund called the State Biodiversity Fund for compensation for rehabilitation of displaced populations. Documentation of traditional knowledge is promoted under this Act. Prior written consent is required from community members if traditional knowledge is sought from them through researchers.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, recognises the traditional rights of tribals and forest dwellers who have been living there for generations, to forest produce. She also briefly mentioned the National Food Security Act, 2013, and its provisions. She concluded with the information that apart from these Acts, states had their own laws in which there were many provisions, schemes, subsidies which could be used by small-scale fishing communities, especially women.

## 2.4 HOUSING, WATER AND SANITATION

*Resource person: Nikita Gopal, CIFT*

### Group 2: Maharashtra and Goa

Angela D'souza spoke about the CRZ notification being misused, lack of protection of housing if these fell within the CRZ boundaries, limited water supply and that too only for purposes of drinking, lack of sanitation facilities and sewage lines along the coast. There was some discussion regarding the need for traditional walls to be built to prevent erosion and the intrusion of

mangroves into residential areas in Maharashtra. Others were of the view that mangroves provided protection and served as retaining walls.

Ujwala informed the participants that demarcations of fishing villages had been approved by the Urban Development Plan in Mumbai after a period of struggle. When development plan was being revised, the fishing villages were shown as slums and the spaces traditionally used for drying fish were shown as open spaces. These were questioned by the fishworker organisations, saying that if it was demarcated as a slum, every house would get only 270 square feet. She explained the historical basis for their claims, whereby the seven traditional fishing islands that constituted Mumbai were recognised even by the British as 'koliwada' and awarded to them. The organisation sourced the records dating back to 1911 to show that the lands belonged to them.

They were able to fight for these rights and with the help of NFF and ICSF were able to secure these lands after a long struggle. She said that they have threatened to protest if the government did not protect their lands under the new development plan and the CRZ notifications. She said that they had, as per the requirements, also ensured that three representatives of the fishing community were part of the CRZ committees in every district.

Nikita Gopal, who facilitated this session, presented two slides showing how right to shelter is a part of the right to life, a basic human right. She listed all the government schemes related to housing informing the participants that the details were in their folders, and elaborated on a few of them. She mentioned the situation of housing in the coastal areas in terms of number of *pucca* houses compared to the national average. She spoke about the funds available under the National Housing Development Board. Karnataka representatives spoke about schemes available but with poor implementation, dependent on political patronage. Kerala, Odisha, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and other states also had some schemes which Nikita mentioned in conclusion of the session.

## 2.5 HEALTH

*Resource person: Mariette Correa*

### Group 5: Karnataka and West Bengal

A representative from Karnataka spoke about the health problems faced by women in small-scale fisheries including body aches, knee and back pains, lack of sleep, gastric problems, headaches and eye problems. As women keep long hours since they have to sit in the markets from morning till evening, accessing health services is difficult as health care centres are closed when the women are able to visit; government hospitals are too far for them to travel. She explained that the Udupi fresh fish vendors association arranged for health camps to test for blood sugar levels, blood pressure, eye ailments and at the government and NGO levels medical camps were organised.

Lack of toilet facilities in the markets create urinary problems for many women as they have to spend long hours in the market. The group demanded that the government provide rest rooms in all market places with good toilet facilities. In Udupi district, a high-quality toilet facility is coming up, but in South Karnataka this does not exist as yet. Other participants also spoke about the health problems of women in small-scale fisheries, including urinary tract infections; skin diseases that are common since women handle trash; health problems due to standing in the sun for long hours; lack of access to water also creates problems. Those handling shrimps in processing industries also have skin disorders.

There was some discussion regarding government schemes for disposal of fish waste. In some villages in Tamil Nadu, communities collect all bio-waste and use this for manure, plastics are



recycled, providing women additional income. Municipality has intervened and is forming these groups into SHGs and federations and is providing training to these groups. Further, in Tamil Nadu, the Government was taking care of solid waste management and had appointed staff for this purpose called ‘village beautifiers’.

Participants were informed that under the Constitution (Seventy Third Amendment) Act, 1992, funds could be made available to assist in garbage management. This is why it was important to get involved in the Gram Sabhas; it was also possible to have garbage management committees included in the Gram Panchayats. Garbage management with budgetary allocation could be included in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan. This could also be done in municipalities. It was also mentioned that under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, the Government would be spending large amounts towards solid waste management. Mangalore Port had already taken up the scheme and other ports would be doing the same. Mariette then briefly mentioned the health problems that women faced and the issues with health care, specifically referring to studies that show that vaccination regimes and breastfeeding are discontinued early, adversely affecting the health of infants and children.

Discussing the right to health, she explained that under Article 21, which is the fundamental right to life, there is sufficient case law in India and Supreme Court judgements to show that the right to life is included the right to health. Moving on to the schemes, she referred to ASHA workers under the National Health Missions—trained by the health department and providing a link between the community and the health services. She elaborated on the other health schemes including Janani Suraksha Yojana, which promoted institutional deliveries, including: Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, National Iron+ Initiative, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana. She then gave some examples of state-level health schemes, like the chief minister’s fund in Tamil Nadu for those from BPL families; and from Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Goa, which had some variations from the national scheme. For example, Goa plans to provide health insurance coverage to the entire population who have lived in Goa for a minimum of five years under the Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana. For schemes under the fisheries departments, she requested participants to refer to their booklets.

## 2.6 VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

*Resource person: Mariette Correa*

### Group 4: Tamil Nadu

A representative from Tamil Nadu shared their discussions on violence against women in the family, in society and at the political level. Starting with violence against women in the family, she said that it began in the womb, because female foeticide was prevalent in their communities through sex-selective abortions. Child marriages, incest, dowry demands were also prevalent. At all rituals in the community, whether at puberty, pregnancy, betrothal, huge expenses were incurred which were increasing with consumerism. New and emergent forms of dowry are increasing the pressure on married women and, in some cases resulting in dowry deaths and suicides. Honour killings and dowry deaths are prevalent, though hidden by the communities, and no criminal cases are lodged.

Regarding violence in the workplace, especially in the market areas where women are involved in auctions, men used sexual innuendos, and were sometimes physically abusive. With these increasing problems related to consumerism and different forms of dowry, during the 16 days of activism, a campaign was launched by SNEHA, in which women went around villages, raising awareness about these issues, after which 64 villages came together and got the traditional

panchayats to pass resolutions that these forms of dowry should be stopped. However, because they continue, village monitoring committees have been set up. Some communities have managed to reduce these practices. Awareness, especially among adolescent girls, as well as monitoring continues in the villages on these issues. The campaign has become more broad-based and now includes men, youth and key people in the villages; where necessary complaints are made to the local police.

Finally, she shared the demands of the women from the coastal communities and also pointed out situations where the fishing communities were discriminating against others like the dalits, preventing them from entering temples, depriving them of benefits coming in after the 2004 tsunami. Mariette then spoke about the more recent laws in India that relate to violence against women. Starting with the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, she highlighted the types of violence included under the Act, and that all those living in a shared household are considered to be in a domestic relationship. This Act also protects women's right to housing. If a woman complains of threats of abuse under this Act, the court can also ask family members to provide her alternative accommodation. Protection officers, NGOs or the police can be approached under this Act if women want to file complaints. Clarifying that this is a civil and not a criminal law, she said that if police were being approached, women needed to specify that they wanted to file a Domestic Incident Report or a complaint under this Act. Monetary compensation and temporary custody can be provided under this Act.

She then discussed the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, which applies to both the organised and unorganised sector; it therefore covers street vendors and domestic workers. She specified what constitutes sexual harassment under the Act. Any employer having more than 10 employees needs to appoint a sexual harassment committee. For the unorganised sector, the government has to appoint a local complaints committee, and people can demand this if these committees are not formed. Panchayats or district authorities can be asked who the members are of the local complaints committee.

She also mentioned that there are criminal acts, two recent ones being the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, which has increased penalties for sexual violence, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. Lastly, she moved on to the schemes which were available, mainly under the Department of Women and Child Development, including short stay homes which provide food, shelter, clothing, medical care; Swadhar scheme for women in difficult circumstances; and the One Stop Crisis Centres which was a more recent scheme intended to have all services including a women's helpline under one roof.

## 2.7 EDUCATION

*Resource person: Mariette Correa*

### **Group 4: Tamil Nadu**

A representative from Tamil Nadu spoke about the situation of education among boys and girls in the fishing communities in Tamil Nadu, giving percentages at different levels of education. She said that in the fishing communities, 90 percent girls and 75 percent boys received school education. This was because boys had to drop out before class 10 to work as child labour. Percentages for higher education followed similar ratios, except for professional education, which is 30 percent for boys and 25 percent for girls. Lack of teachers in government schools has resulted in children not attending, and some schools are shutting down. Government-aided schools and management schools charge more fees than permitted.

Sexual abuse within schools, lack of transport facilities, and the negative role of media adversely affects school retention. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, (RTE Act) was not properly implemented; it requires schools to admit 25 percent of students free of cost. Due to poor infrastructure, lack of facilities, and the transfer of teachers in government schools, these schools were shutting down. Tall promises and incentives by private schools make parents opt to send their children to English medium schools, but later find these unaffordable. Due to all this, NGOs try to intervene through getting the school management committees to function. She said that attempts were being made to identify school drop-outs and they were re-enrolled if possible. Due to the introduction of certain craft/nets, boys are in demand as cheap labour; once they start earning, it is a challenge to get them to return to school.

She then listed the demands discussed by the group. Implementing the SSF Guidelines and taking steps to ban some fishing practices would help the education of boys. Up to the age of 18 years, free, compulsory and quality education should be provided to all. Amendments are needed to the RTE Act and the Act should be implemented. Corporal punishment and sexual abuse by teachers should be severely punished, and not only by transferring the teachers, as is the practice now. Privatisation of education should be stopped, curbing the mushrooming of poor quality educational institutions. Panchayats should form all the standing committees they are supposed to, including for education, and funds should be allocated for these; likewise for school management committees. Professional guidance should be given to youth from fishing communities for vocations and employment; and quota systems available for these youth in fisheries related jobs. Fishing communities are minorities in the panchayats; they do not have much of a voice. The Panchayat areas should be redefined. There is also a need for a separate ministry at the central level.

Mariette then explained what the SSF Guidelines say about education; that the states should ensure that facilities are available for the educational needs of small-scale fishing communities. She explained that the Right to Education was added to the Indian Constitution and became a right only in 2002. According to the Right to Education Act, 25 percent seats have to be reserved for the poor and other categories; no donations are allowed, no child can be held back till completion of elementary education, and there is provision for special training for school drop outs. She mentioned that the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Movement) and its components, the mid-day meal scheme, and the more recent Swacch Vidyalaya (Clean Schools) scheme from 2014, which provides toilets to all the schools reducing drop outs, especially of female students. Most states also have schemes under the various departments (such as fisheries or SC/ST department) for scholarships, loans, cash awards. It is important to identify the schemes that fishing communities can access.

## 2.8 SOCIAL PROTECTION

*Resource person: N Venugopalan, ICSF*

Venugopalan first spoke about the education and health situation in brief across the various states, as well as the involvement of women in fisheries. He then expanded on the various social protection schemes that were available to fishing communities, using tables and graphs. There were schemes available in most states for housing, water and sanitation, roads, electricity and savings-cum-relief, while very few states had schemes for life insurance and natural disasters. Most states had group accident insurance schemes, but only Kerala had rehabilitation due to sea erosion, eviction for port development, old age pension for allied workers and insurance for allied workers.

He said that credit support system and debt relief were very weak and only three states had schemes for skill development training, with Odisha giving a lot of money for non-conventional sources of energy. He then spoke about various education and health schemes mainly for women, which exist in very few states. Finally, he gave recommendations for schemes that could be taken up, like natural disaster compensation/sea erosion/loss of coastal space due to changes in coastal landforms, payment to displaced fishers to find alternative employment due to development, compensation against loss of livelihood against oil spill and environmental hazards such as pollution.

Specifically in the post harvest sector, Venugopalan suggested that identity cards be given to bonafide fish vendors, potable water be available at fish landing centres, harbours and fish markets, as also better sanitation facilities. Learning from Odisha, he said other states could have schemes offering clean, non-conventional energy sources; HIV/AIDS awareness was important in places like Goa and Srikakulam for migrant fishermen; mobile banking facility at fish markets and at fish landing centres could be developed; and, as in Tamil Nadu, other states could ask for legislative or policy support for fishers involved in post harvest activities.

He informed participants that NABARD has a climate change fund which could support schemes for protection from extreme weather events at fish markets. He added suggestions like free legal assistance to protect the right of women to livelihood; support schemes for dryfish units/vendors/markets; legal rights of vending areas in markets and harbours; schemes for better hygiene in fish markets; and, credit to members of cooperatives based on their shares. Due to seasonal fluctuations in the market and fishing bans, allowances could be given to women vendors; support schemes related to occupational hazards; support schemes for traditional fish processors, women head-loaders, bicycle fish vendors, petty sellers and those involved in ancillary activities like basket weaving; nutritional support schemes for the children; assistance to families of fishers arrested like in Tamil Nadu; coverage of insurance to houses due to sea erosion or cyclones; better scholarships for studying at maritime universities; support schemes like pension for widows.

Sebastian pointed out that some of these schemes may be economic and not social protection. He said that social protection services could also be highlighted. He added that there was a need to cover social protection schemes from the community to show that these exist in addition to the government schemes.

*The session was followed by a screening of an ICSF documentary film, Shifting Undercurrents: the Women Seaweed Collectors of the Gulf of Mannar., Tamil Nadu, India*

## Session 3: Strategies for intervention and future plans

Day 3 began with songs by the groups from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

### Brainstorming: What is small-scale fisheries?

Nalini Nayak started the first session of the day with a brainstorming session. Each group was asked about their understanding of small-scale fisheries.

The responses were:

**Tamil Nadu (Thoothukudi):** Those fishing within 12 nautical miles, up to 1 fathom depth, using traditional nets such as sardine nets, trammel net, cast net, crab net, sanguvala (bottom set gillnet), using motors of 10-30 horse power.

**Andhra Pradesh:** Those fishing with traditional craft with inboard/outboard motors.

**Goa:** Those who do not use boat, go into the shallow waters and fish with cast nets (tribal community from Goa).

**Maharashtra:** Those fishing in creeks and near the shore for shellfish and small fish.

**Kerala:** Those who go to fish in traditional craft with a motor, fishing only for their livelihood.

**Karnataka:** Those using small non-motorised boats catching prawn, shrimp, crabs using cast net.

**Odisha:** Those fishing in creeks, river mouths, ponds and seashore using traditional boats, fishing for their livelihood.

**West Bengal:** Those using small motorised boats upto 30 horse power, fishing in the Sunderbans, where there is high tidal influx, so that to go to even half a fathom depth, 30 HP engines are needed.

Summarising the above, Nalini Nayak said that in coastal fisheries, there was a lot of variation – from no boats, to non-motorised boats close to the shore, to boats with motors <30 HP; fishing for their own livelihood (like working on the boat) and up to 12 nautical mile at depths on deeper than one fathom. Thus, when talking about SSF, there was so much variation along the coast that a single definition was very difficult.

Sebastian Mathew summarised the discussion by saying that six criteria could be used to determine small-scale fisheries:

1. **Area of fishing:** inter tidal zone, estuarine, creek
2. **Distance from shore:** near shore to 12 nautical miles
3. **Depth:** 1 fathom
4. **Gear:** shore seine, crab nets, trammel nets, cast nets, sardine nets
5. **Craft:** traditional craft
6. **Propulsion:** non-motorised; motorised (10-30 HP motors)

Depending on the location, the combination of criteria would vary because of the variation in geography, sea and land shores, not to mention the fishing culture. In the Sundarbans, high propulsion would be required to reach the fishing ground, as well as for safety, unlike in Kerala, which does not witness the type of typhoons and hurricanes that one sees in the Bay of Bengal. He emphasised that if one wanted to engage with SSF in a particular area, one needs to define the area in which one wants to work and then define what is small-scale fisheries for that area. The local variations, using a combination of criteria, must be codified, thus providing a contextual definition of SSF. At the national level we can have a list of definitions of SSF that are contextual.

Nalini concluded the session urging women to enter the discussion and define SSF locally, using specific terms they have learnt, such as craft, gear, area and propulsion. State groups should sit together and decide what is small-scale fisheries in their state.

### 3.1 SUMMARY OF THE GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND STRATEGY FOR INTERVENTION

*Nalini Nayak, ICSF*

Nalini started by saying that fisherwomen tended to think only of fish, markets and family. The discussions on the previous day dealing with laws, schemes and other things seemed very boring, as they had not heard of these things earlier. She spoke about the importance of understanding these laws and schemes, which exist not because of the government's generosity but because some people asked for them, struggled for them through strikes, dharnas (sit-ins for peaceful protest) and even going to prison or giving their lives for these.

She emphasised the need to link life in the community and fish in the sea. The previous day, someone from Tamil Nadu had talked of an increase in violence in the fishing community because of dowry in the community, which was not there previously. With increased motorisation and mechanisation in fisheries, more money was needed for investing in fisheries and so demand for dowry increased. With a bigger boat, a fisherman needs bigger nets with smaller mesh to catch more fish to pay back what he borrowed to get the engine and net. Then he needs other equipment such as lights and GPS. For all this, he asks his wife to get more money. He also needs more diesel as he has to go further away to catch fish and the cost of each fishing trip becomes increasingly higher. Back on the shore, when the fish catch is sold, most of the returns go to the different companies and for repaying loans and fuel charges; only 20 paise out of each rupee comes home. The wife has to go to work, perhaps to buy fish from a far away landing centre, and so on. Though there may be more money coming into the home, life becomes increasingly difficult. If there are more daughters, then more dowry is required. The result is female infanticide, resulting in just 928 women for 1,000 men in fishing communities across the country.

Nalini drew analogies between violence at home and violence at the sea. She spoke about the cycle of life of every species—whether it was fish or human. Like humans, the life cycle of fish is also important and like everything else, fish need time to grow. If small fish are caught, it doesn't leave any scope for fish stocks to rebuild, meaning there won't be fish in the future. Hence, she asked participants to reflect and decide on what kind of fisheries and what kind of society we wanted in the future and to speak up for that. Reiterating that we ought to be concerned about many more things than just the market, she said it was important to think about the next generation, as we are responsible for them, but are destroying the world for them. We need to do what we believe was right and learn to stand and speak out. We have responsibilities for the future generation and, as women, we can get together and work for the future; know what is going on in our communities, speak out in the panchayats, challenge the men in our communities.

Informing the participants that the SSF Guidelines are available in all languages and are an important tool in this effort, she stressed the importance of talking about and sharing the SSF Guidelines with as many people as possible and demanding that the government implements them.

Sebastian Mathew explained that the SSF Guidelines had a human rights-based approach and that over 120 governments had agreed to them. They had to be understood well in order to confidently engage with various relevant government departments including fisheries, agriculture, mining, education, health, social welfare, tribal welfare, panchayats, etc. The whole basis of the Human Rights approach was that even if we decided what is small-scale fisheries, the governments had to respect that. Apart from being members of a family and community, we are also citizens

of a country. Acts made by the country are for the benefit and protection of its people and link UN Human Rights frameworks to its citizens.

At the end of the session, Jesu Rethinam and her group broke into a song about violence against women “We are breaking the silence and breaking open the door”

### 3.2 ORGANISATION AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

*Resource persons: Nalini Nayak, Jesu Rethinam, Ujwala Patil, Seeta Dasan and Sonia George*

Introducing the speakers on the dais, Nalini said they represented three different kinds of organisations, as also three methods of organising fishworkers.

Jesu Rethinam from Tamil Nadu had been working with women for a long time. She spoke about how they built up local federations of women’s organisations (women fish vendor groups and SHGs) and also organised trade unions linked to the state union, which is linked to the NFF, a national trade union of fishworkers. She said that Jesu’s organisation was the only group working with several community issues—violence, education, housing.

Jesu spoke about the challenges faced at various levels: internal, community level, state level and at the national level. An example she gave of an internal challenge was the dowry issue; it was difficult to convince people about this issue even at the local level. Self help groups (SHG) would talk only about credit, but at the village they take up all practical and strategic gender issues. However, at the village level, when women started addressing issues, caste panchayats began to feel threatened since these are male dominated. Initially women were not allowed to even sit at the panchayat meetings. After the women’s groups grew stronger, they won a small victory in being allowed to sit in the male dominated panchayat. In some villages, men demanded that women show them their accounts but in return, men would not reciprocate. Women insisted that they are accountable to only themselves and would not show their accounts to the panchayats if they did not reciprocate. In the Karaikal fishing harbour, the women as a collective control the fish market and do not allow the men into the market. She said that a platform was needed for gender, community, market and fishing related issues.

Nalini introduced Ujwala Patil from Maharashtra, saying that she had been working at several levels and been organising market associations, especially in Mumbai. She is in the process of registering a cooperative of women fish vendors. She is also a member of the NFF and is involved with a trade union, the Maharashtra Machchimar Krishi Samiti. She is the district women’s head, having assumed leadership since 2010.

Ujwala said that the maximum number of fisherwomen in Maharashtra are in Mumbai and their problems are different from those from other districts. Therefore, she felt that if these women could be unionised, their issues would be addressed. They joined the fishermen’s union, which was previously all male. They participated in the various meetings, including the CRZ consultations, but the focus was largely on fishing, even when women’s problems were discussed. Geographic conditions vary in each district of Maharashtra; there was variation in the fishworkers, too, and conflicts between large fishers and small fishers. There was no concern for women’s issues, with all conversations centred around fishing. It is clear from the 2014 SSF Guidelines that fisher women have a role and for this they have to stick together.

Being a daughter-in-law of a fisherman with many relatives into fishing, Ujwala decided to do the organising. ICSF provided directions and at each workshop, she obtained more knowledge on what had to be done. She began writing letters to the government departments on her own letterhead, and began to understand the need to make a cooperative, for only then could many schemes be accessed. However, she discovered that the rules in cooperatives were not conducive

for fisherwomen. For example, for women to form a cooperative they need a minimum of ten boats. But women do not own boats. Hence, the solution, according to the Maharashtra Registrar of Cooperative Societies, was to change the criteria. That, though, is not easy. The fisheries minister has agreed and the file is now sitting in the government. She would like to have cooperatives at every landing centre. She expects the new fisheries policy will be adopted soon and it will cover the entire community.

It is necessary for women union members from every state to share how their problems are addressed. For example, it appeared that Kerala has a number of schemes, their union is strong and there is implementation of plans. She questioned why it was ICSF that needed to give information on schemes and not the state government. She called for the formation of a separate union for women. It will take a while, however, to explain to women the schemes that are available for their welfare, about what is a union, what is a cooperative, and why these are needed. She concluded saying it was necessary to get women from each state together to form a union and then to form a federation of these unions.

Nalini introduced Seeta Dasan and Sonia George from Kerala, who spoke about their experiences at various levels in the formation of unions. Nalini explained that for a central trade union (CTU) to be recognised and registered, it should have 800,000 members of eight trades from eight states. Only if you were a member of a CTU could you sit in the Indian Trade Union Congress, where tripartite discussions (employers, employees and government) take place. So, if fishworkers' issues are to be discussed, our organisations should come together and become members of a CTU. Sonia George and Seeta Dasan both belonged to a CTU, SEWA. Nalini Nayak asked them to describe the problems they faced in bringing issues to the trade union front and what successes they had.

Seetha Dasan works at the state level of SEWA Kerala, and is involved with workers from multiple sectors, not just fishworkers, who are nevertheless important in their trade union. The union is of women workers only, from the informal and unorganised sector. At the village level, which is the foundation of the SEWA union, there are efforts to raise awareness and discuss their rights. Each village unit proposes a convenor to the state level. With respect to fishworkers, the specific issues are the availability of fish in landing centres, transportation related issues, problems at fish markets, access to credit, bonus-related issues, indebtedness and relationship with other trade unions, like fees to other trade unions. The challenges lie in addressing basic issues of women fishworkers and how to provide a forum for discussion. While the mainstream union discusses fuel and economic security, they do not look at women's livelihood and rights related issues.

Sonia George explained the activities at the national level. After a long struggle, SEWA was registered in 1972 as a national union and, after nearly 30 years, it was recognised as a CTU. No trade union had experimented with only women from the unorganised informal sector before this. It was a struggle to take up non-mainstream works, for example, of domestic workers. SEWA lobbied at various levels and consulted diverse trade unions. Internationally, the movement (for domestic workers) was strong, but this was not the case at the national level, although 95 percent of domestic workers are women. During the pre-budget discussion, it was mentioned that a comprehensive legislation for domestic workers was being planned. Another significant achievement was in the case of street vendors and the related law passed in 2014. Women fish vendors are also part of the street vendor groups. She also spoke about the national platform of different street vendor organisations and the policy of 2004, amended in 2009. She explained that it was only after many campaigns and lobbying with the ministries and a relay strike in 2014, that the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, was passed by the UPA government. It was a major milestone. The process was not easy; while they succeeded on some fronts, they did not achieve their goals on others.



There are ten trade unions represented by men and only one by women; but at least now, they were listening to women. She said sometimes, the issues raised by SEWA are not the priorities of the other unions. For example, their issues are largely related to the NREGA and anganwadis (courtyard shelters under the Integrated Child Development Services programme), but not the unorganised sector. Hence, they needed to be convinced. She said that organising women was not an easy task and there was also a problem of getting it across that women have a union and it is not an NGO.

### 3.3 FUTURE PLANS

In the final session, Nalini summarised the varying types of organisations, their positives and negatives, reminding the participants that they, too, belonged to different kinds of organisations. For the last session, she asked them to sit in their state groups and discuss the following points:

1. What do we want to do in our state? What are our key issues?
2. Is it a good idea to create this platform, and should our organisation join and should each state have multiple organisations represented in the groups?
3. Are there specific demands we want to make to the Central government?

At the end of the discussion, a representative summarised the discussion. The highlights from each state group's presentations are given below.

#### Goa and Maharashtra

- In Maharashtra, will first carry out a survey of women in all the fish markets of fresh fish vendors, dry fish makers at the taluka and district levels
- Explain all the issues discussed here over the past 3 days
- Make an all-women trade union in Maharashtra and Goa
- In Goa, none except Shasikala's group was registered; hence they would first carry out a survey at the taluka and district level, then register groups and request Ujwala to help us and take it forward
- Platform: We need to learn more and then talk about our platform; will be holding a meeting in February about this

#### West Bengal

- Thanked ICSF for informing them about so many unknown things
- Will share the learnings at the block level and then at a state-level workshop
- Platform: yes, we want a national platform for fisherwomen
- A national demand: the government must allow us to fish in national parks and sanctuaries

#### Karnataka: Udipitaluk fresh fish women vendors association

- Will go back to the taluka and create awareness about SSF Guidelines, various rights, access to market resources
- Our problems will be brought to the notice of the municipality and gram panchayats
- Will demand their right to space for drying fish
- They will check with various departments why social security measures were not being implemented in Karnataka
- Create awareness among their group members about free education up to 18 years, provision for scholarship and RTE
- They will demand facilities like rest rooms, toilets, water at fish markets

## Mangalore: Mogaveera society

- After this workshop, they are well informed of their rights
- Will go to the various departments such as education department, women and child development, department of fisheries, and others. Ask for schemes and provisions for women and disseminate the information to their members
- After this, they will convene a meeting of the sanghas and societies, hold discussions and decide on a course of action
- Karnataka has two important schemes: Matsyavahini for transport and sale of fish; and Matsyashraya for houses. While the housing scheme has been implemented, the benefit from the transportation scheme has not been obtained. Demands about this will be made to the government
- They will take up the issues of social welfare that the state government has not implemented. Pension for women after 60 will be taken up, even at the central level.

## Tamil Nadu

- Women should be made aware of the SSF Guidelines as well as about Sagarmala, the national plan
- Tamil Nadu and Puducherry women in fisheries want identity card
- State-level demand: While the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013, has been enacted, internal complaints committees have not been set up. They want to push for the creation of anti-harassment committees at the panchayat level.
- Single women workers in fisheries require relief during the banned period and rainy season
- Welfare board and cooperatives are constituted but implementation is poor and hence need to push for implementation and fund allocation.
- Ramnad district: women seaweed collectors need permission and ID cards from the department, and also be able to mend their nets and dry fish on the coast, which the department doesn't allow right now. They will be working for these issues exclusively.
- Thoothukudi district: dry fish vendors and salt pan workers require relief during the banned season and rainy season
- Nagapattinam-Karaikal: Will carry out a survey and map existing markets in the formal and informal sectors
- Cuddalore: No relief has been received for losses of livelihoods, nets, houses, sustained during the floods of 2015; demands will be made to obtain the relief.
- 85 percent of the coastal communities do not have permanent pattas (title deeds); this issue will be taken up
- State level fishworkers' union has already been registered and three conventions have been held; SSF Guidelines and many of the issues discussed over the three days will be taken up at next year's state-level convention
- Yes, we need a national platform

*[Nalini Nayak intervened here to say that they should approach the Labour Department for identity cards; many schemes were available with the Labour Department.]*

## Kerala

- First, will make the SSF Guidelines more extensively known and through this, get more members into the union
- As women workers, they do not have any accident insurance that is available to men. They will find out about schemes and provisions for women
- They will interact with Matsyafed to get credit for women in the market
- There are still places in Kerala where women do not have pattas for their houses
- They will try to increase the participation of women in the gram sabha so that their issues are taken up
- They will continue to raise the voice of women in the trade union
- Will inform and take forward all that they learnt about social issues
- They are in full support of creation of a national platform
- They will try to develop at the national level a policy for SSF

## Andhra Pradesh

- Will carry out a massive membership drive to include all women in associations
- The following issues would be taken up:
  - Many people have been displaced due the construction of a major power plants and hence have lost access to their resources and have no tenurial rights, people have still not got pattas after displacement.
  - Access to credit is a major problem, as also the lack of drinking water supply.
  - Huge conflict between traditional and mechanised sectors.
  - Lack of market infrastructure
  - They would participate in panchayats and make their voices heard
  - A national platform would be beneficial. It is required
  - Policy for displaced people is a must; with meaningful stakeholder participation

## Odisha

- Odisha Traditional Fishworkers Trade Union includes both men and women
- Will try to strengthen women's committee in the union; from the SHG to district level
- Will discuss at the village and district level about SSF and what they have learnt at the three day workshop

Nalini concluded saying the discussion on the future plans was heartening. It was important to keep in touch and support each other and start strengthening groups at the local level; they could also work towards a national platform as many groups desired this. Participants were asked for suggestions for improvement of the workshop and any other feedback. One participant said that she would have liked more details on the SSF Guidelines; she had not heard about them before. It was pointed out that these were available in all languages and participants could take as many copies as they wanted.

With this, the workshop came to a close. Mariette Correa and Nalini Nayak thanked the participants and the resource persons for their contributions, as also those who had provided logistical services and, of course, ICSF.

# ANNEX 1

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## Questionnaire sent to participants prior to the workshop

Dear Participant,

In the month of November 2016, ICSF is planning a workshop on ‘Enhancing capacities of women fishworkers in India for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines’. This follows from the workshop held in 2010 in Mahabalipuram, and is an effort to bring us up to date on the changing context of the adoption of two international instruments: The Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines, 2012, or CFS in short) and The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), FAO 2014.

In order to enrich the workshop, we are preparing material in advance. Towards this, we would like you to send a short write-up about the issues facing women in fisheries, as well as accounts of successful campaigns to defend their interests. These will then be shared during the training programme with other participants. These questions are a mere guide to sending in your note. Please answer these questions reflecting on changes over the years.

We will appreciate it if you, as a representative of your organisation, answer the questionnaire below and return it to us by the ... August.

### Questionnaire on women in fisheries

1. Are there specific laws or policies in your state that ensure equal tenure rights for women and men? Are these adequately implemented and enforced?
2. Have there been occasion/instances/programmes when women have been displaced in your fisheries, their access to fish been limited, their access to the markets been jeopardized? Please give examples.
3. Have special efforts been made to assist women in retaining their space in the fishery? If yes, what are they? If yes and they have failed, why do you think this happened, what were the loopholes? If no attempts have been made by the government, what suggestions do you have? How do you think women’s spaces in the fishery can be better protected? Can you share some successful examples indicating how women’s spaces have been protected or what new spaces they have found?
4. Are there violations of women’s rights—like denial of access to aquatic resources and areas for processing fish, obstructions when they desire to market fish, extortion at the markets, physical abuse. Please consider all categories of women workers like shell fish and sea grass, sea weed collectors, net menders, collaborative spouses.
5. What has been the condition of women workers in processing plants? To your knowledge, are these workers from small-scale fishing communities? Are they protected under labour laws?
6. What role do women play in fishworker organizations? In administration, in deciding management norms, changes in fishing gear, investments in craft and gear? If they do, what important contributions have they made and how have the men responded? Do you think the capacity of women to participate in fishworker organisations has been strengthened? Please elaborate.

7. Do you think that community-based organizations have guaranteed women's participation in decision-making processes including those related to conservation and fisheries management and their access to resources such as fish and fish products? Is the traditional and local knowledge of women recognised as an important component in decision-making processes?
8. Are separate spaces ensured for women in ssf to organise autonomously? Are women's issues adequately addressed within FWOs?
9. Are there cultural values and practices in communities that discriminate against women's right to access to resources, access to property, right to mobility, participation in decision making in the communities? What should be done to change this situation?
10. Have there been attempts to secure an environment of safety and freedom from violence and sexual abuse within the household and community?
11. Do policy makers in fisheries have biases that discriminate against women? What is the impact?
12. Do women from the community, traders, processors also participate in government discussions on fish trade, health and sanitary measures for trade, and decisions related to financing developments in fisheries? If not, what are your comments on this?
13. What schemes, capacity-building programmes, policies has the State developed and implemented for small-scale fishing communities in your State and for women in these communities in particular?
14. Are you aware of instances where the State has recognized and protected collective rights to the resources and territories on which fishing communities have traditionally depended on for their food security and livelihoods?
15. Are you aware of any research done that highlights the condition and contribution of women to small-scale fisheries? If yes, are these reflected in policies, schemes, etc?
16. Do you think the impact of natural disasters on women in small-scale fisheries is acknowledged? Are men and women both involved in the State's response to natural disasters?
17. Have there been instances of displacement of forced migration of small-scale fishing communities? How has this differentially impacted men and women in the communities?

## ANNEX 2

### Enhancing capacities of women fishworkers in India for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines

Ashoka Hall, Asha Nivas Social Service Centre, Chennai, India  
21-23 November, 2016

#### Programme Agenda

21 NOVEMBER 2016	
9:30 A.M – 10: 30 A.M	<p><b>Introduction to the Workshop and expectations of the participants</b> Nalini Nayak, <i>Member, ICSF</i></p> <p><b>Introduction of participants and groups</b></p>
10:30 A.M – 11:00 A.M	<p><b>Women in fisheries: The context</b> Ramya Rajagopalan, <i>ICSF</i></p>
11:00 A.M – 11: 30 A.M	Tea
11:30 A.M – 13:00 P.M.	<p><b>Introduction to Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)</b> Sebastian Mathew, <i>Executive Secretary</i> and Nalini Nayak, <i>Member, ICSF</i></p>
13:00 P.M – 14:00 P.M	Lunch
14:00 P.M – 15:00 P.M	<b>Introduction of participants and groups (Contd..)</b>
15:00 P.M – 15:15 P.M	Tea
15:15 P.M – 15:30 P.M	<p><b>Group discussions preparation</b> Mariette Correa, <i>ICSF</i></p>
15:30 P.M – 17:30 P.M	<p>Group Discussion on the following topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Markets: facilities, infrastructure, space, rights</li> <li>2.2 Human Rights (right to food, right to information)</li> <li>2.3 Access to resources, fish</li> <li>2.4 Housing, water and sanitation</li> <li>2.5 Health</li> <li>2.6 Violence and harassment</li> <li>2.7 Education</li> <li>2.8 Social protection</li> </ul>
17:30 P.M – 18:30 P.M	<p>Reporting back of groups (Group Presentation and summing up by Resource person who also relates to the government provisions for the area)</p> <p><b>Markets (facilities, infrastructure, space, rights)</b> <i>Resource Person: Dr. Nikita Gopal, CIFT</i></p>

18: 30 P.M- 19:00 P.M	<b>Field visit logistics and instruction</b> Venugopalan
<b>22 NOVEMBER 2016</b>	
5: 30 – 8:30 A.M	<b>Field Visit to three markets in Chennai city</b> Royapuram markets, Chindaripet and Saidapet fish market
10: 00 A.M – 11:00 A.M	<b>Human Rights</b> <i>Resource person:</i> Nalini and Mariette
11:00 A.M – 11:30 A.M	Tea
11:30 A.M – 13:30 P.M	Reporting back of groups <b>Access to resources, fish</b> <i>Resource person:</i> Dr. SwathiLekshmi, CMFRI <b>Housing, water and sanitation</b> <i>Resource person:</i> Nikita Gopal <b>Health</b> <i>Resource person:</i> Mariette
13:30 P.M – 14:30 P.M	Lunch
14:30 P.M – 16:30 P.M	<b>Violence and Harassment</b> <i>Resource person:</i> Mariette <b>Education</b> <i>Resource person:</i> Mariette
16:30 P.M – 16:45 P.M	Tea
16:45 P.M – 17.30	<b>Social Security</b> <i>Resource person:</i> Venugopalan
17.30 - 18:00 P.M	<i>Documentary film:</i> Shifting Undercurrents
<b>23 NOVEMBER 2016</b>	
9:00 A.M – 10:30 A.M	<b>Summing up of the group discussions and understanding of strategy for intervention</b> Nalini Nayak
10:00 A.M – 11:30 A.M	<b>Organizing and challenges ahead</b> Nalini Nayak, Jesu Rethinam, Ujwala Patil, Seeta Dasan, Sonia George
11:30 A.M – 12:00 P.M	Tea
12:00 P.M – 14:00 P.M	<b>Group discussion and presentations on “Carrying forward the agenda”</b>
14:00 P.M – 14:30 P.M	Feedback and Vote of thanks

## Annex 3

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### GROUP DISCUSSION MEMBERS

Group 1	Andhra and Orissa = 12	Markets, education, violence, human rights
Group 2	Maharashtra and Goa = 9	Markets, housing, education, violence
Group 3	Kerala and South Tamil nadu - 5 + 5 = 10	Markets, Human Rights/housing/water/
Group 4	North Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry - 7+2 = 9	Access to resources, education, violence
Group 5	West Bengal and Karnataka - 3+8 = 11	Access to resources, health/housing, water, sanitation, violence



## Annex 4

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### GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### Health

1. What are the health issues and problems faced by women in your community (SSF)? Discuss the health problems and the challenges in accessing health care.
2. What is being done to deal with these problems—by the community, government, NGOs, others?
3. What do you think you/your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to solve these problems?
4. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs) ?

#### Education

1. What is the situation regarding educational levels and access to education for your community?
2. What are the barriers that prevent better levels of education in your community?
3. What is being done to deal with these barriers—by the community, government, NGOs, others?
4. What do you think you/ your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to solve these problems?
5. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs) ?

#### Violence

1. Do women continue to experience discrimination and violence in fishing communities—within the communities and external threats? In what ways?
2. Why do you think these problems continue?
3. What is being done to deal with these problems—by the community, government, NGOs, others?
4. What do you think you/ your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to solve these problems?
5. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs) ?

#### Human rights

1. Can you outline ways in which your human rights are promoted?—(e.g. —right to equality and non-discrimination, right to life and livelihoods, right to information? Are they involved in village level or community level decision-making processes?
2. Have there been violations of human rights in your communities—could you elaborate?
3. Has the Government taken measures to protect your human rights which are guaranteed by the Constitution—specifically discuss right to equality and non-discrimination, right to life and livelihoods. If yes, please give examples. If no, in what areas should action be taken?

4. What do you think you/ your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to ensure that your human rights are promoted and protected?
5. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs) ?

### **Housing, water and sanitation**

1. What are the problems faced by your community, and especially women, in terms of housing, water and sanitation?
2. What is being done to deal with these problems—by the community, government, NGOs, others?
3. What do you think you/ your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to solve these problems?
4. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs) ?

### **Social Security**

1. Do you get benefits of social security schemes/ provisions from the government? If yes, please elaborate on the nature of social security that you get. If no, what are the reasons for this?—pension scheme, maternity benefit, health/medical insurance, death benefit, unemployment benefit, disability benefit?
2. Are the social security provisions of the Government adequate? Are there challenges to access social security benefits from the Government? Which are the departments from where you can access these?
3. What do you think you/ your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to overcome these challenges?
4. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs) ?

### **Markets (facilities, infrastructure, space, rights)**

1. Have there been occasion/instances/programmes—where women have been displaced from markets? Access to procure fish to sell has been a problem? Access to fresh fish? Please give examples?
2. Have special efforts been made to assist women in retaining their space in the markets—whole sale, harbour based ? If yes, what are they? If yes and they have failed, why do you think this happened, what were the loopholes? If no attempts have been made by the government, what suggestions do you have?
3. What are the issues relating to facilities and infrastructure at markets?
4. How do you think women's spaces in the markets can be better protected? Can you share some successful examples indicating how women's spaces have been protected or what new spaces they have found?
5. What do you think you/ your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to ensure that your market spaces are protected?
6. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs) ?

### **Access to resources, fish**

1. Do women in your communities have secure rights to tenure (habitation, areas for processing and selling fish, areas for other pre- and post-harvest activities, fishing) in your communities?

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If not what are the reasons that exclude or marginalize them? If yes, how are or can these rights be safeguarded?

2. Do you have access to resources—to collect seaweed, crabs, shrimp seed, fish in back waters. What are the challenges faced in accessing these resources?
3. What are the issues for sustainable management of fishery resources? Are there any challenges? Are you involved in deciding local level management aspects
4. Does your community have sufficient space for post harvest activities, drying, smoking, storing of fish? Do women also have access to sufficient space? If not, why not?
5. What do you think you/ your organisation/ women in SSF can practically do to ensure that your access to resources, fish is sustained? What alternatives do you propose in the case of declining access to fish?
6. What are your demands from the State, from others (e.g. FWOs, NGOs)

## Annex 5

### Enhancing capacities of women fishworkers in India for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines

Ashoka Hall, Asha Nivas Social Service Centre, Chennai, India  
21-23 November, 2016

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# Report on Workshop on Enhancing Capacities of Women Fishworkers in India for the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines

## Report

The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) Trust organised a national workshop on ‘Enhancing capacities of women fishworkers in India for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines’ in Chennai, India, on November 21-23, 2016. There were 63 participants from nine coastal states of India—participants from Gujarat could not attend. They were informed of the situation and role of women in India’s fisheries, as also the relevance of the ‘Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication’ (SSF Guidelines) to women in small-scale fisheries and the opportunities to improve their conditions. This report of the workshop provides the various discussions that were held during the three days. Apart from participants sharing their experiences on all the issues, the challenges they faced, and their struggles and successes to overcome these, resource persons provided information on the legal frameworks and schemes at the national and state levels, as also the mechanisms to access these to help women in small-scale fisheries to promote their interests and protect their rights.



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 ILOs 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.

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