

**Proceedings on  
District Level Consultation on Coastal Livelihoods Security in  
Ganjam District (Odisha); Issues and Opportunities**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**Venue: Hill View Cottage, Gopalpur on-sea**



*Supported by*

**ICCO-India, New Delhi**

**Organized by**

**Voluntary Integration for Education and Welfare of Society (VIEWS)**

Email: [views.odisha@gmail.com](mailto:views.odisha@gmail.com), Cell No: +91 09937381255  
[www.viewsindia.org.in](http://www.viewsindia.org.in)

## 1. Background and Objectives of the Consultation

Odisha is one of the major maritime states, offering vast scope for development of inland, brackish water and maritime fisheries. By judiciously harnessing these resources, market, employment, income could be generated for the rural artisanal/traditional fishermen who are considered to be poorest of the poor. The fisheries sector incorporates a diverse range of livelihood activities, from production and processing to marketing and ancillary functions, but many of the people engaged in these activities remain unrecognized. This is a serious situation, as a majority of these people mainly; traditional and artisanal fishermen communities are very poor and extremely vulnerable. Inadequate data exists on their numbers, geographical spread, socio-economic status, resulting in poor policy responses to their needs and a failure to predict possible impact on these groups from policies targeting other people within and outside the sector. **According to National Planning Commission Report 2011 small scale fishers in India are poorest of the poor.** “Fishermen communities have been left behind in economic activities and remain backward socially and economically” (*The marine Fisheries conservation, management and traditional fisher folk welfare bill of India-2010*).

The primary objective of the consultation meet was to create a platform where all the stakeholders can come together and figure out the most pertinent issues and challenges plaguing the fishing communities and chalking out possible solutions

## 2. Session I- Inaugural session

A one day district level consultation on coastal livelihood security for marine fishing communities was held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at the Hill View Cottage, Gopalpur-on-Sea, Ganjam.. As many as 130 village leaders of fishing communities from 27 coastal fishing villages of Ganjam district, academicians, Trade Union, Civil Society, PRI and



media representatives participated in this consultation. Mr. Udit Babu, Project Director, VIEWS, Odisha welcomed the chief guest and the chairman of the inaugural session Mr. Jacob Thundiyl, Director, PREM and the guest of Honor Mrs. B. Chitamma with a brief introduction about the contribution in changing lives of the poor communities in Ganjam district of Odisha. Sri Udit Babu also welcomed the Secretary of VIEWS, Mr. S. Bheema Rao, who has been instrumental in contributing since young age towards the development and upliftment of his own fishing community. In his welcome address Mr. Udit Babu, outlined the resource potential of the marine fisheries in the state. He also outlined the importance of fishery sector in providing livelihood security and creating employment opportunities. He suggested the need for brainstorming among all the stakeholders to unleash the potential that the sector offers.

Mr. S. Bheema Rao in his address explained the need of strong community based organisations for the weaker sections of the society in tapping the opportunities that the sector inherently offers. He also stressed the need to partner with financial institutions and government departments for overall development of the sector. He further stressed on the need for microenterprise promotion and sustainable livelihood in Marine fisheries in Odisha. He further said the need of technological intervention in the context of Sea Safety and fish catch.

The chief guest of the consultation Mr. Jacob Thundiyl, Director of People's Rural Education Movement (PREM), and the guest of honor Mrs. B. Chitamma, president Samudram Women SHG federation (UNDP Equator Prize winner for poverty reduction through sustainable use of local biodiversity in 2010) inaugurated the consultation by lightening the lamp, and delivered the inaugural address. Mr. Jacob Thundiyl, Director, PREM in his address emphasized the need to include the marine fishermen community in the scheduled tribe list. He outlined that migration is one of the major factor



plaguing the community. He also highlighted the need for conservation of coastal marine resources and securing the sustainable livelihoods options of the poor fishing communities.

Smt. B.Chittama, in her address stated the success story of Samudram SHG Federation and the role played by women in

SHGs in empowerment of fishing communities and export marketing of marine fish value added products through collective action. She emphasized the need for energising the fisheries sector in the state through women



participation and for the benefit of one and all.

While summing up the session's proceedings the chairman flagged the following issues:

To ensure socio-economic security of artisanal fishermen/small scale fishermen by

- Recognition of marine fishing communities as a schedule tribe
- Empowerment through strengthening of Community based organisations
- Participatory management of coastal resources
- Migration and demand of marine fish products in export markets
- Strengthening of community based intuitions towards their rights

The inaugural session of the consultation ended with Mr. Sunil Kumar Ghadei, Program Manager, VIEWS, Odisha proposing a vote of thanks to the dignitaries and participants.

## **Thematic Session II- *Livelihoods Issues for fishing Communities***

This session was chaired by Prof. (Dr.) Haribandhu Panda, pro-vice chancellor of Centurion University of Technology and Management (CUTM), Bhubaneswar. Mr. S.Panda, United Artist Association (UAA), Mr. K.Alleya, General Secretary, Odisha Traditional Fish Workers Union (OTFU) and Mr. Sumanta Banerjee, the principal investigator of the study attended as a panellist for this thematic session. The leaders from people's organisation of marine fishing communities presented their livelihoods issues of fishing communities.

**Field testimonies:**

From the field testimony from people's organization, the issues that have been identified are unemployment among the youth. Mr. L.Kamaraju, Village leader, Deegipur observed that the education for youth is a curse for their society. The reason being, after completing the matriculation and higher secondary education, they do not have any vision about their career aspirations; neither have they had the financial support to get enrolled in a professional course. At the same time they cannot go back to fishing, as they have not learnt the art from childhood. Thus, in the given context, they often get engaged in all sorts of activities which result in exploitation of their own community people. Thus, the group of unemployed youth is considered to be a burden on the society. As, these group of youth members of the community generally engage themselves as chit fund agent and middlemen.

Mrs. Parvati, Women Self Help Group from Aryapalli stressed on the need for brand creation for the products promoted by SHGs members. Mr. L. Chinnyya expressed that due lack of finance and credit facilities, the poor fishermen are unable to buy engine boats. It forces the community to leave the fishing occupation and get converted into construction labours. Mr. N. Joga Rao from Markandi village said that in the absence of a fishing harbour connecting the river in their village and the sea, the locals are unable to go for fishing for entire nine months every year.



Smt. G Bullamma President of Gangadevi Mahila Vikash, Venkatraipur expressed her concern over the migration of women along with their children to metro cities in view of the decreased fish catch and non availability of fish for selling in villages. In the long run, these women have been getting affected with AIDS and other diseases. In the absence of cold chain and storage facilities the fish catch often rots and gets destroyed said a Mrs. S.Devaki, a women SHG leader of New Golabandha. These also affect the fishermen is getting them the fair price for the catch. When they enter the Huma market the fisher women are required to pay different types of market fees decided by the traders which is often beyond the price they

can afford and thus get exploited. These haats also lack toilet and sanitation facilities for women thus leading to a lot of problems.

The key note speaker and the session chair Prof. (Dr.) Haribandhu Panda, pro-vice chancellor of Centurion University of Technology and Management; Bhubaneswar shared the success story of cooperative movement of “AMUL” and he emphasized the key ingredients for enhancing the income aspects of livelihood security. He talked about the significance of strengthening groups in order to enhance the collective bargaining power, access to finance and to explore the appropriate technology intervention in the given context.



Mr. K. Alleya, General Secretary of Odisha Traditional Fish workers Union and Executive member of National Fish workers Forum (NFF) in his address stressed the urgent need for a



separate Ministry of Fisheries. He also emphasized the need for a ministerial berth to the Member of Parliament from the fishermen community. He stressed on the need to develop adequate infrastructure facilities such as approach road to fish landing/shed/reservoirs. He further said the need to create appropriate mechanisms

and approaches for ensuring remunerative price to fish producers.

Mr. Sumanta Banerjee, the principal investigator undertaking the coastal livelihood security study presented in a power point presentation in this consultation. The detailed concept note of the study findings and way forward was enclosed in annexure-II. In his presentation he talked about various socio-economic issues affecting the community at large and he shared his field survey findings to the participants. The issues identified by him are in the context of production (fish catch), processing and marketing. He highlighted few specific issues in the given context. The issues are declining access to fish (due to impact of conservation measures), technological up gradation, infrastructural bottleneck, lack of market linkage, investment and financing (cost of borrowing), Institutional, legislation and social. At the same time he emphasized the huge opportunity that remain untapped in terms of fish value added products and dry- fish processing. Mr. Krishna Chandra Das, Branch Manager of Development Credit Bank (DCB) Ltd said that banks are interested to support market led and financially viable enterprise projects for livelihoods promotion of fishing communities. The second session of the consultation ended with Mr. Udit Babu, Project Director, VIEWS, Odisha proposing a vote of thanks to the dignitaries and participants

### SESSION III- OPEN HOUSE

The consultation meet was attended by more than 120 fishing community leaders, women folk, traditional fishermen from 27 coastal villages in Ganjam district. The presentation by the Community leaders was followed by an Open House Session at the end of the Session II in which there was an exchange of views. The women community leaders highlighted issues related to decline in fish catch, decreasing purchasing



power, share of income being reduced due to layers of intermediaries, lack of availability of adequate and timely finance and the cost of borrowing. In this particular session the problem tree analysis, resource map analysis of the villages inhabited by fishing communities were shown to the participants and thereafter discussions continued on that line and probable

opportunities were identified at different levels with respect to Value added products and Dry fish processing and marketing in a hygienic way.

Mr. B Lokanathan, President of Village Development Committee from Ramaipatna said that his village was very close to the sea and therefore regularly affected by the rising sea water. The cyclone causes huge disasters every year. The village requested through letters for some disaster mitigation measures in the area. The women community leaders from Aryapalli SHG federation highlighted the need for proper packaging, promotion and also explore the branding opportunities.

Mr. K.Jayaraju, Advisor, Kalinga Fishermen's Union highlighted the need for active participation from the unions of fishing community. He appreciated the government for playing a proactive role in the context of development of fishing community, but at the same time he stressed on the need to contribute more towards the development of fishing communities in terms of better implementation of legislation and policies. He also appreciated the secretary of VIEWS, for providing a platform in the form of district consultation to discuss the issues and challenges, which has not been done since last 5 years. He further stated that this particular consultation has brought us together.

### **Concluding Sessions: Sustainable Livelihoods and its Way Forward**

The consultation meet was attended by community leaders, women folk, traditional fishermen from 27 coastal villages in Ganjam district. The presentation by the Community leaders was followed by an Open House Session at the end of the Session II in which there was an exchange of views. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair, other dignitaries who participated in the consultation, by Mr. S. Bheema Rao, Secretary, VIEWS, Odisha

**. The ways forward in this regard are as follows:**

- Conservation of coastal bio-diversity and common property of fishing communities
- Effective implementation of CRZ and OMFRA act
- Inclusion of Marine fishing communities in Schedule Tribe list as a marine tribe
- Reorganization and strengthening of marine fishermen's union at district level

- Infrastructure development for fishing sector at various places
- Improving in access of Social security schemes to the old and poor fishermen
- Improvement of disaster mitigation measures for seashore villages to reduce the impact of disasters during cyclones
- Improvement of fishing technology
- Employment opportunities for educated fishing youth in Odisha
- Providing financial inclusion services to the need fishing communities
- Strengthening of market systems & linkages
- Technological intervention and value addition
- Strengthening Women SHG movement
- Enterprising Development & Business development services
- Vocational skill trainings
- Setting up need-based infrastructure
- Developing synergies between agencies
- Providing capital and tools support
- Improving the general quality of life of the fishers with better access to transport, communications, housing, water and sanitation, healthcare, education, and other basic necessities
- Promoting participatory governance at micro level
- Implementation of comprehensive marine fishery policy
- Better access to existing livelihood entitlements
- Series of consultation on fishermen issues to be conducted and a memorandum of fishermen issues to be submitted to the Chief Minister of Odisha and Fisher departments for policy level advocacy.

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m with a vote of thanks to the Chair, other dignitaries who participated in the consultation, by Mr. Mangaraj Nag, Community Development Coordinator of VIEWS.

