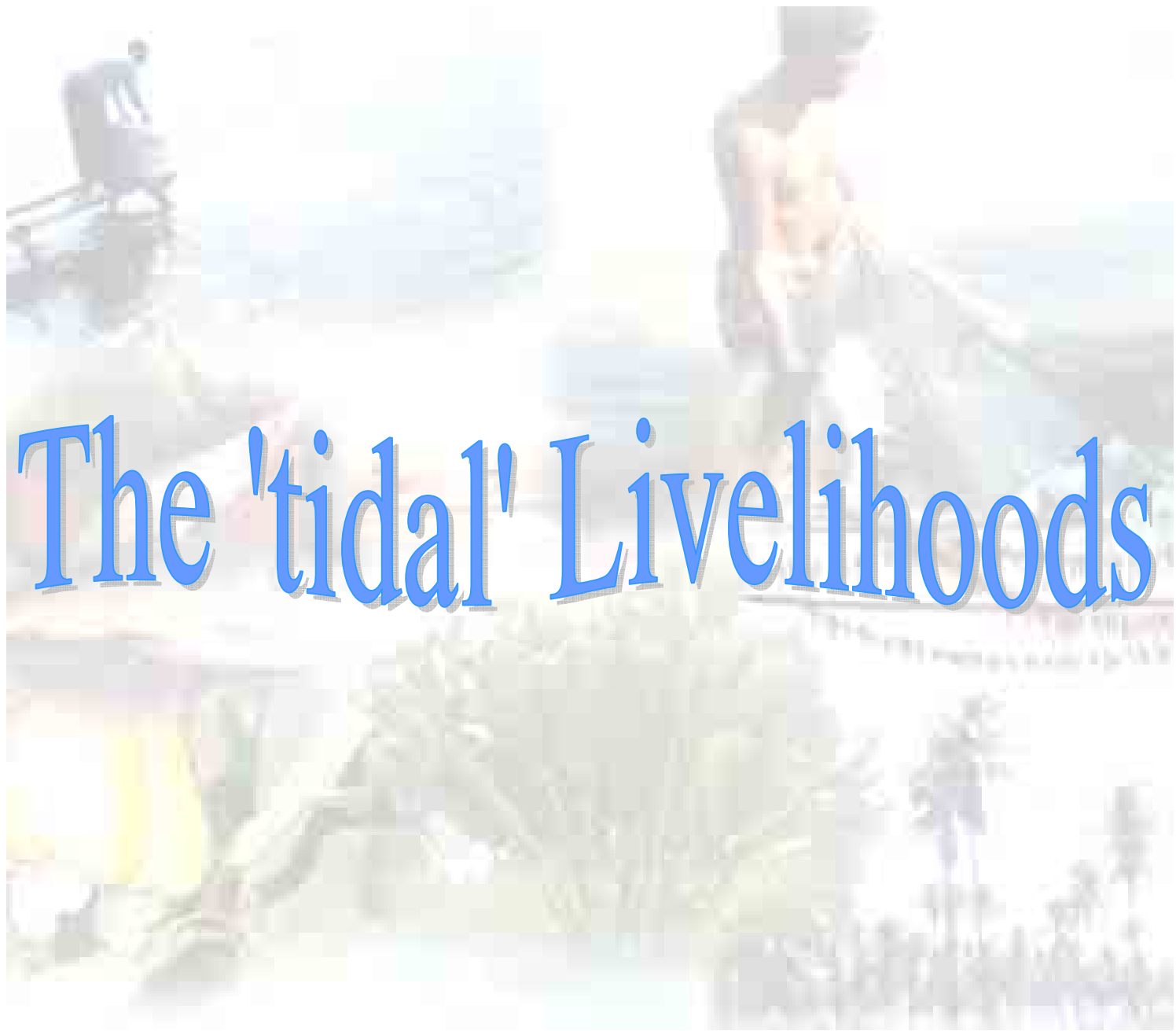


# livelihoods

*today and tomorrow*

May 2008



## The 'tidal' Livelihoods



**Summer came. Summer heat is up.** Yet, this is the time suitable for going deep into the depths of livelihoods of the poor. This is the best time for the poor to sit and analyse their current reality, to make their plans and to get trainings and orientations. It is also a convenient time for the capacity building activities for the development workers in development organizations.

Nargis cyclone that hit Myanmar has killed more than 60000 people and more than 1.5 million have been affected severely. This is reckoned as the most destructive cyclone in the world during the last 15 years.

In this context, the 'livelihoods' peeped into the coastal livelihoods. India's coastline is longer than 8000 kilometers. The coast, even if we take modest 50 km inside as the strip for our consideration, accommodates more than 250 million people. If we keep aside the metros like Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, the cities like Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Visakhapatnam etc, industrial areas, delta and other irrigated areas and lake areas, at least 20 million people will be living in between. These are eking out a marginalized existence amidst uncertainties and risks of a very high order. It is important to note that they have almost all the livelihoods of India with them. Yet they are hand-to-mouth marginal livelihoods. The fishermen, salt farmers, farmers farming the saline and not-so-saline lands, labour, migrants, fish-sellers, sea-product collectors and sellers, people with livelihoods intrinsically linked to coastal eco-systems etc., are all part of these coastal people in the margins. When one goes into the sea for three days hunting fish, without knowing the likely catch and without knowing whether we return safely or not till the last minute – it is a day-to-day adventure! We cannot understand the extent of adventure unless we do this at least once!

Therefore, I guess, they are a special community amongst the coastal people. Men fish and women sell fish. Some salt, some plantations and some wages add to their portfolio of livelihoods. In essence, they are an average poor. Inadequate income to meet basic needs despite multiple livelihoods! Expenditure for the 'adventure' and 'recuperation' has certain processes and traditions. Altogether a lot of expenses!

It appears that SEZs and coast have a close link. It is still doubtful whether they benefit them. Coastal Regulations, in the absence of complete compliance, are not able to offer help to them. While 2004 Tsunami has increased assets and opportunities for some, it appears that a lot that belong to them has not reached them.

SIFFS is a big example of organizing them and improving their lot. People like Thomas Kocheri are in the forefront of attempting to organize them.

Globalisation, Privatisation, Liberalisation, High Economic Growth, growing new services and new livelihoods - do these coastal people in the margins receive any fruits of these? Or will they become 'ecological refugees' due to climate changes – natural, physical, economic and social? This is the question before all of us.

Ms. Nirmala Deshpande, probably the only surviving direct colleague/follower of Gandhi, is no more with us now. May her soul rest in peace! **Gandhi is inescapable as long as we publicly cannot disown universal values** – values like truth, integrity and non-violence. Gandhi will continue to inspire us.

The burning issue that is troubling us in the country today is the inflation and price rise. This has stayed the thought of advancing general elections a bit.

In our 'livelihoods' journey, working with the cutting-edge workers, community leaders, development organizations to build their livelihoods 'orientation' and spread livelihoods thought has become important. We are grateful to all of you who are helping us in this pursuit.

Please do not forget that your support and encouragement alone is taking us forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. G.', with a horizontal line underneath.

G. Muralidhar

the 'livelihoods' team

**‘livelihoods’ team**

Editor in Chief	G Muralidhar
Working Editor	T Nirmala
Edit Associates	G Bhargava
	Ch Ramesh
	V Muralidhar
	M Vijaybhaser Srinivas
	K Bharathi
Cartoonist	G Dayanand

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For enquiries contact:

Ch Ramesh

Mobile: 09949369720

Or

**AKSHARA** Network for Development Support Services,

HIG II B-25 F-6, APHB Colony,  
Baghlingampally, Hyderabad - 500044

Mobile: 09347802302

www.aksharakriti.org

akshara@aksharakriti.org

# Response

We present the readers' response here.

I have taken interest in reading the livelihoods mailed every month. I find it highly informative covering a wide range of subjects and issues of global, national and regional concerns and are most updated. I am sure this information will be quite useful for development workers around.

Nilondra Tanya

It was great to read the livelihood issues focussing on the Dalits. Dalits are one of the most discriminated people within our country and who account a large population. Most people lack decent livelihood and leading a life of poverty and misery. The Dalit issue brought out by you focuses on many areas and its pretty informative

Binu Zachariah

## Contributions Solicited

If you would like to contribute an article or have something interesting to share, email or mail it to us. If it contains pictures or files please remember to attach them to the email. Please include your name, email, contact information such as phone number, location (nation) and area of expertise. If your article is accepted an editor will prepare the article for publication and may edit it for accuracy, grammar, style, and length.

Email address is [akshara@aksharakriti.org](mailto:akshara@aksharakriti.org) ; please include "livelihoods Contribution" in the subject line .  
Mailing address is: HIG-II Block 25 Flat 6, APHB Colony, Baghlingampally, HYDERABAD, India 500 044.

Go to the People  
Live with the People  
Learn from the People  
Plan with the People  
Work with the People

Start with what they know  
Build on what they have  
Teach by showing, Learn by doing

Not a showcase, but a pattern  
Not piecemeal, but integrated  
Not odds and ends, but a system  
Not to conform, but to transform  
Not relief, but release

## Call Center by Visually Challenged Individuals

- Under the project called Drishti, Tata Teleservices Ltd, the promoters of Tata Indicom, has employed 20 visually challenged young men and women at its Mumbai call centre. The call centre works from the premises of the National Association of the Blind (NAB) in Worli area. The call centre, which started with 10 executives, doubled its staff to 20 within a year and celebrated its first anniversary on the 15th of April. After the selection process the selected boys and girls are taught necessary communication skills for the job. Enthused by the success of the experiment in Mumbai, the company is now planning to expand the Dhristi project to other cities like Ahmedabad and New Delhi.

**India's Green Economy** - According to Cleantech Group, venture capital and private equity investment in alternative energy, transportation and water supply sectors has more than doubled between 2006 and 2007. The investments are driven by factors like water scarcity, increasing energy demands, projections that Ganges will dry up by 2030 and the increasing population in the country.

**Green Energy and Green Livelihoods Award** - Sierra Club announced \$1,00,000 "Green energy and green livelihood award" for NGOs. The purpose of the award is to build public support for community organizations in India that are helping the country leapfrog past polluting and inefficient technologies in order to create green jobs and a green economy. The award will be given annually to one exemplary environmental or environmentally-related organization that satisfies predetermined criteria for constructive community-based work.

**100th Clean Energy Project in AP** - The UN backed Kyoto Protocol has approved a clean energy project in Andhra Pradesh. The project is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 34, 000 tonnes annually. To get registered with the Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism and then earn Certified Emission Reduction credits, projects must pass a rigorous process of approval and independent third-party

monitoring designed to ensure that emission reductions claimed by a project are real, verifiable and additional to what would have taken place without the project.

**Agricola Medal** - The Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, was conferred the UN organization's highest award, the Agricola medal, in recognition of his contribution to agricultural development and the reduction of hunger and poverty. The FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf noted that the flow of credit to Indian farmers has almost doubled in the last four years. India is the world's second largest agricultural producer after China, with farming employing over 60 per cent of the population and accounting for 18.5 per cent of the GDP.

**Biofuels and Gender and Equity Issues** - According to a new study conducted by FAO, rapid increases in the large scale production of liquid biofuels in developing countries could increase the marginalization of women in rural areas threatening their livelihoods. Production of liquid biofuels requires an intensive use of resources and inputs to which women traditionally have limited access.

**Corporate Service Corps** - Global information technology player, IBM, as part of its CSR program has selected 100 employees across 33 countries including India for specific projects under its Corporate Service Corps initiative. These 100 employees are sent to emerging and developing countries to address core challenges confronting society in fields like education and environment. IBM is teamed up with 3 NGOs in this initiative - the Citizen's Development Corp, Digital Opportunity Trust and Australian Business Ventures. Before going to their allotted countries, the IBM teams will engage in three months of preparatory work to learn about local customs, culture, language, project goals and socio-economic and political realities of the places they will visit.

**Solar Bulbs for Rajasthan** - Rajasthan Electronics and Instruments Ltd, manufactured a 37-watt solar panel, a 12-volt battery with an estimated life of five years and a two-point connection, which includes two nine-watt CFL bulbs. It costs Rs.

10,625 and gives about seven hours of lighting. Since 1999, 73,590 solar home lighting systems have been installed in Rajasthan. This is more than one-fifth of the total such systems installed across the country. The initiative is implemented by Gram Panchayat and receives subsidy from the state government.

**Community TVs to Nagaland** - The Government of Nagaland has decided to distribute community television sets to all recognized villages in the state to improve communication process and to better link them with global developments.

**Manual helping to fight AIDS** - To equip low-literate and neo-literate rural women with right information, the Population Council of India has developed a training manual on women's vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS infection. 'Our Stories: Women Speak Out Against HIV' is an interactive and visually attractive training manual that has reached out to over 4000 women. The manual is based on inputs and drawings by rural women in AP and West Bengal. All the stories are based on real life incidents of women. Currently a total of one lakh booklets, published in Bengali and Telugu are distributed directly to women. According to National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), 39 per cent of the total number of people living with HIV are women.

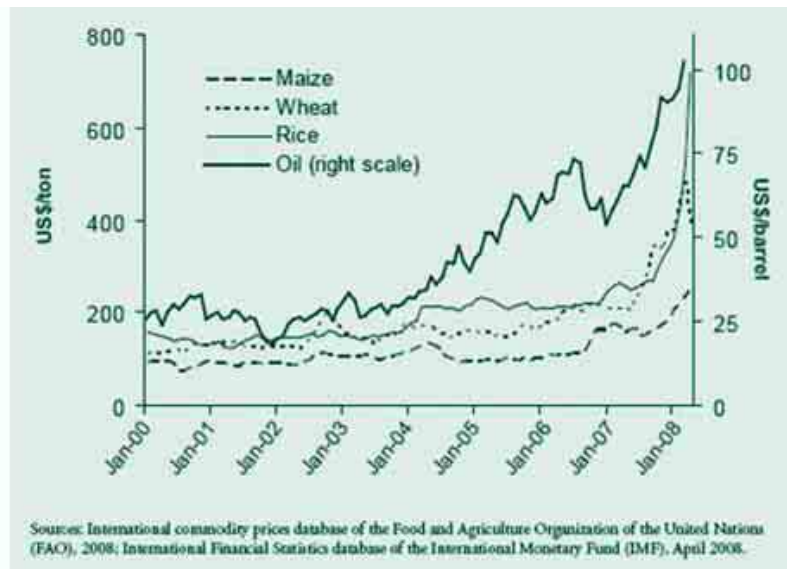
## World Development Indicators 2008 -

Below are some facts released in April 2008 by World Bank.

- ♦ 91 per cent of males and 84 per cent of females in the world are literate
- ♦ 80 per cent of children in the world are immunized against measles
- ♦ Burundi has the highest rate of female participation in the labour force at 93 per cent
- ♦ Netherlands has the greatest proportion of internet users in the world with 89% while Iraq has the lowest barely one tenth of 1 per cent
- ♦ Cambodia has the lowest debt service ratio of just less than 1 per cent. Uruguay has the highest with more than 87 per cent

## Rising Food Prices

### World Commodity Prices, January 2000 - April 2008



The sharp increase in food prices is raising serious concerns about the food and nutrition situation of the people in the world, especially the poor in developing nations. The crisis has reached alarming proportions in some countries resulting in civil unrest. Between 2007 and 2008 social unrest related to high food prices occurred in 30 countries. Inflation is spiraling upwards unabated across. The prices of wheat, maize, rice, dairy products, meat, poultry, edible oils have seen huge rise. The purchasing power of the poor is drastically jeopardized. The ratio of wages of unskilled labour to food prices is declining. Close to 70 per cent of their earnings are spent on food. Progress towards Millennium Development Goals is compromised.

Both new and ongoing forces are driving the world food situation today. Rise in energy prices, subsidized biofuels production, income and population growth, globalization and urbanization are significantly contributing to surging demand. On the supply side, land and water constraints, underinvestment in rural infrastructure and agriculture innovation, lack of access to inputs and weather disruptions

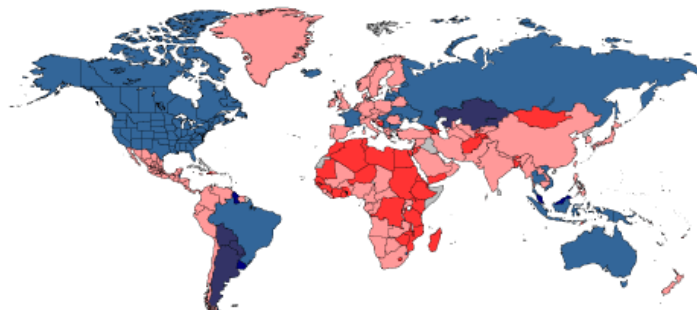
are impairing productivity. The complete potential of dry land agriculture remains untapped. Ad hoc market and trade policies like export bans and import subsidies add more volatility to the food market.

With U.S. and Europe subsidizing agriculture-based energy, farmers have massively shifted to cultivation of biofuels crops. In the US a third of maize goes to ethanol production. Increasing population and economic growth of Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are demanding more and different kinds of food. At the same time the global response to increasing demand has been slow. Farmers across are in distress. Land and water constraints coupled with underinvestment in agriculture and deficient agricultural banking have crippled the supply side. High agricultural subsidies in developed countries have distorted markets and put the farmers in developing countries at a disadvantage in the global market. Climate changes have added further complexity. Desertification is accelerating in China and sub-Saharan Africa and frequent flooding and changing patterns of rainfall is showing significant impact on agricultural production.

At a time when the demand for food is at its highest the plight of the food producers (farmers) is disturbing. This paradox needs to be addressed immediately. The governments can intervene to ensure household food security by strengthening the targeted safety nets (like food for work program, mid-day meals in schools), can come up with trade policy measures to lower domestic food prices and make work towards enhancing long term food supply by increasing investments in the primary sector, agriculture.

Gandhi's saying that there is enough to meet everyone's need but not greed holds greater relevance today. Studies indicate that on an average the per capita consumption of rice in Asia is about 200 kilos per year as against 700 kilos in the West. The difference is very disturbing. Its time to move more towards sustainable lifestyles, so that everyone gets their due share. ☺

2007 - 2008 IMPACT OF PROJECTED FOOD PRICE INCREASES ON TRADE BALANCES



- Large losers (trade balance worsening > 1% 2005 GDP)
- Moderate losers (trade balance worsening < 1% 2005 GDP)
- Moderate gainers (trade balance improving < 1% 2005 GDP)
- Large gainers (trade balance improving > 1% 2005 GDP)
- No data

SOURCE: The World Bank

## May Day - May 1st

The first of May is International Workers' Day, celebrated to commemorate the long and bloody struggle of working people throughout the world against their oppressors. This day is observed in most countries except some countries like the U.S. and Canada.

The connection between May Day and the labour movement began in the 1880s in response to the brutal massacre of workers and labour leaders demonstrating for an eight-hour work day in Chicago. In 1884, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labour Unions declared that eight hours would constitute a legal day's work from and after May 1, 1886. When workers went on strike at the McCormick Reaper Works Factory in Chicago on May 3, 1886, police fired into the peacefully assembled crowd, killing four and wounding many others. The anarchists, who had been integral in the eight-hour movement, called for a mass rally the next day in Haymarket Square to protest this brutality. The rally proceeded peacefully until the end when 180 police officers entered the square and ordered the crowd to disperse. At that point, someone threw a bomb, killing one police officer and wounding 70 others. The police responded by firing into the crowd, killing one and injuring many others.



With the violence at Haymarket the active anarchists were charged with conspiracy to commit murder. They were found guilty and sentenced to death, despite a lack of evidence. Four were hanged in 1887, one committed suicide in prison, and the remaining three were finally pardoned in 1893. Lucy Parsons, the widow of one anarchist, Albert Parsons, traveled all over the world urging workers to celebrate May Day and to remember the events of Haymarket and the subsequent killing of those fighting for the rights of all workers. Instead of destroying the anarchist movement, these events served to strengthen the movement, spawning other radical organizations, including the Industrial Workers of the World. Over time, May Day grew to become an important day for organizing and unifying the international struggle of workers.

In India as of 2006 there are estimated to be more than 495 million workers of which only 7 per cent are in the formal organized sector while the rest are in unorganized sector. There are many issues plaguing the labour market in India today particularly the unorganized sector. While economic growth in India is on the upward spiral very little has trickled

down to the lower rungs of the workforce. The Minimum Wages Act of 1948 is based on Article 43 of the Constitution of India which provides for fixing such minimum wages for the workers as are sufficient for them to lead a respectable social life. However the implementation of the Act by the States has not kept up with the increasing prices and costs of living. Minimum wages vary across the States and sector of industry. Some industries like footwear and apparel have very sketchy minimum wages. Though the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 stipulates that men and women performing the same job receive the same payment, the enforcement of the Act especially in rural areas is weak. India does not have a comprehensive social security system. Child labour is widely prevalent. The 2001 national census puts the number of child workers at 12.7 million. However, the ILO has estimated the number at 44 million and Global March Against Child Labour, an NGO, claims there are 60 million. Trafficking in women and children is widespread. HIV/AIDS is severely impacting the productivity of the workforce. Occupational health and safety continues to remain problem area in India. Education and skill building is still outside the reach of many. Unskilled workforce is losing out. Workers engaged in traditional livelihoods are suffering. SEZs are the norm of the day but the implementation of labour laws in these Zones is dismal. Many workers are employed on contract basis. Workers are forced to work longer hours. The growth environment as a whole in India seems to be progressing towards promoting more of wage labourers and less of entrepreneurs.

India is a founding member of the ILO and has ratified a total of 39 ILO Conventions. Of the eight core ILO Conventions, India has ratified four: the Conventions on Forced Labour, Equal Remuneration, Abolition of Forced Labour, and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation). India has not ratified the remaining four core conventions on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, Minimum Age, and Worst Forms of Child Labour. In India there are 45 laws at the national level and many more at the level of state governments that monitor the functioning of the labour markets. Many observers believe that India's labour laws are antiquated and in need of reform. The second National Labour Commission recommended review of Indian labour laws and the social security system and the strengthening of governmental programs to eradicate child labour.

As a young nation India has a large potential labour force. Agriculture is over populated. Traditional livelihoods are fading or wanting reorientation. There is a need to absorb the surplus labour force into remunerative employment in upcoming sectors. The unorganized labour remains completely unprotected against the forces of liberalization and globalization. Education and productive skills still remain elusive to many. All this needs to change for a better future, for young India to shine. ☺

## Viswanath Reddy - the Cooperator

"It is better to light a lamp than to curse darkness" is the age old adage. Twenty five years ago, in the small dusty village of Mulkanoor, 170 Kilometers northeast of Hyderabad, AP, an enterprising young man lit one small lamp to dispel the darkness in his area. As years went on the lamp not only survived but it got brighter and brighter. That man was Sri Aligireddy Kasi Viswanath Reddy, founder of Mulkanoor Multi Purpose Cooperative.

Sri Aligireddy Kasi Viswanath Reddy was born in the year 1926 in Mulkanoor village of Bhimdevarapalli Mandal, in Karimnagar District of Andhra Pradesh. He had his early education in Warangal town of AP. Later he went to Osmania University to pursue further education, but did not continue to complete his studies. He left Osmania University to participate in the Independence Movement and the struggle against Nizam's Rule. Soon after independence, Viswanath Reddy decided to settle down in his village and serve the community around him.



On 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 1956, Viswanath Reddy along with friends promoted the Mulkanoor Multipurpose Cooperative. He started in a small way, but with a big dream, a dream founded on the firm belief that the co-operative spirit and the co-operative movement would provide the needed answers to the problems of rural India. He believed that genuine progress was directly dependent on maximum power being exercised by people in running their own institutions. He dreamt that the multi purpose cooperative would cater to all the needs of the farmer.

The Mulkanoor Multipurpose Cooperative started by disbursing short term loans for crop raising. Later they gave medium term loans towards electric pump sets from the year 1957. The cooperative gradually enlarged its activities to cover almost all the needs required by a farmer. Through the cooperative, Viswanath Reddy brought about a sea change in the villages covered by the cooperative. Agriculture production has increased more than five times. 90% of the cropped area for paddy, maize and jowar came under hybrid seed. Farm machinery is extensively used. Poultry, dairy and sheep rearing increased. Farmers started using new agricultural methods.

Viswanath Reddy took a set of backward villages under the fold of the cooperative and brought a transformation in the villages. The significant feature of his efforts is that this change has not been achieved by an external agency or person but by the people themselves.

The activities of Mulkanoor encompass all areas of economic activity in the village. Viswanath Reddy has evolved a 'total service concept' long before many started talking about integrated rural development.

A farmer in Mulkanoor can avail many services. He can buy all his agricultural inputs – seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc from the cooperative. He can buy or hire other inputs like oil engines, electric motors, sprayers, dusters, implements, pipes and tractors etc. He can make use of the expert

services of the qualified graduates in agricultural science who are working in the extension wing of the cooperative.

In addition to basic agriculture, farmers have been encouraged to set up poultry farms. Dairies have been set up. For the people interested in sheep rearing the society supplies sheep. The services of two qualified veterinary doctors is also made available.

The cooperative has achieved a vertical integration in the value chain from producer to the consumer and has achieved the objective of eliminating middlemen. The cooperative owns a number of modern processing units like a rice mill, an oil mill, a seed cleaner and a poultry and cattle feed plant. It also helps members in construction of poultry sheds, cattle sheds, pump houses etc. The society has used the interest earned by members on their deposits for buying life insurance policies for them. It has been encouraging its members to take up general insurance policies on their assets such as cattle, pump sets etc.

Viswanath Reddy believed that education is the key factor in achieving progress. He walked from village to village holding meetings and explaining to the farmers and the rural poor the advantages of literacy. He also talked extensively on the advantages of working together. Having recognized the importance of population control he organized several family planning camps in the area.

His work is so exemplary that Thomas Carter of the World Council of Credit Unions commented, "The Mulkanoor Cooperative Rural Bank is an extraordinary example of what can be accomplished by and through Cooperation. The translation of the vision and potential at Mulkanoor raises the question why it has not been done elsewhere in India".

Viswanath Reddy has also given his services as Director of State Bank of India, as member of Central Poultry Development Advisory Council of India and as member of the Research Advisory Council of AP Agricultural University.

Viswanath Reddy passed away in 1986, but his spirit of cooperation continues to live through Mulkanoor and influences the cooperative movement in the country. It is his vision and leadership that put Mulkanoor as an exemplary cooperative in the world. There were numerous attempts to replicate Mulkanoor. He continues to inspire Cooperative Development Foundation (Samakhya) co-founded by Viswanath Reddy. CDF's co-founder, exemplary cooperator of our times, Rama Reddy continues to lead it today. CDF is spearheading the cooperative movement in the country today. ☺



# Salt Farming

India is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest salt making country in the world producing about 18 million tonnes a year. The state of Gujarat accounts for about 70 per cent of India's salt production followed by followed by Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra producing the remaining 30 per cent salt.

India's salt industry is labour intensive. There are more than 1.5 lakh workers and their families engaged in producing salt. Most of them operate on a contract basis for a period of eight months in a year and make about Rs.80 to 90 per day. Life on salt pans is far from easy. Salt farmers work in the desert and coastal areas under the scorching sun often devoid of basic amenities like drinking water, schools, hospitals or markets. They risk blindness, skin lesions, blood pressure. Their children are vulnerable to chronic cough and TB. The low wages they get by no means compensate the risk involved. The exploitation by intermediaries and government apathy is another reality the salt farmers/workers live with.

In this context, SARDS, an NGO in Prakasam district of AP started working with salt farmers to improve their livelihoods in particular and socio-economic conditions in general. Infrastructure development in salt pans, social mobilization and institution building, revolving loan fund support for livelihood promotion, value addition and processing, advocacy and lobbying, children education and awareness creation on HIV/AIDS among salt farming communities are the major interventions taken up by SARDS for salt farmers.

Critical infrastructure needs that affect the livelihoods of the salt farming communities positively were taken up as part of the project intervention. Formation and strengthening of protective bunds to reduce the damages due to floods and high tides to the salt pans, construction of culverts that reduced the transportation costs, providing drinking water facilities in salt pans, electrification of the salt pans covering 850 Acres and storage platforms to protect the salt pans from the floods are the interventions taken up. Infrastructure facilities created by SARDS in the salt pans resulted in reduction of the vulnerability to the floods there by damages to salt pans, reduced transportation costs which is around 10 – 15% of the total investment in the salt production in addition to improved working conditions for the salt farming communities.

Salt farming communities are mobilized into Common Resource Groups and federated at village level as Nets and at project level as Forum. Various capacity building events were organized to institutionalize the systems and processes among the groups for ensuring the sustainability of the community based organizations.

A revolving loan fund (RLF) is created to meet the credit needs of the salt farmers. The delivery of the revolving fund is made through Common Resource Groups. Nets and Forum became integral part of RLF program and other service delivery. As of now about Rs. 74 lakhs were released as part of revolving fund to the salt farmers. This is inclusive of Rs.13 lakhs to be distributed this year.



Three processing units are proposed to be established by the end of 2008, in the villages to facilitate small salt producers to take up salt processing collectively and thus earn better prices through value addition.

To increase the stock holding capacity by arresting the distress sales by the farmers at lower prices, SARDS facilitated stock based lending by the MACS. As a part of this effort 50000 quintals of salt worth Rs. 25,00,000 was stored by the farmers. When the price of salt rose from Rs. 50 to Rs.70 per quintal it added Rs.10,00,000 value to the farmers salt stocks. At the same time Pakala Village Farmers Forum decided to procure salt from their members at Rs.50 per quintal. Rs.7.5 lakhs worth salt was procured and stored. At the existing rates the value of that stock is Rs.9.75 lakhs, which fetch the village federation Rs.2.25 lakhs as profit.

In association with Concern World Wide, SARDS has taken up advocacy platform to address the issues affecting the salt farmers. Workshops on the living conditions of the salt farmers were conducted, campaigns, rallies and public meetings were held and attention of the media and government on the plight of salt farmers was sought.

In addition to these interventions, SARDS established resource and educational centers for the children of salt farmers and working communities. 12 Balasanghas and 2 Grama Balala Vedikas are formed for the children to spread awareness about various issues including rights and protection issues.

SARDS formed women head load vendors groups with 300 members and provided credit to them to procure salt at low price and sell it at a later date when the demand is high during pickling season.

The interventions of SARDS among others, helped improve infrastructure and reduced transportation costs which accounts for 10 to 15 per cent in over all investment. With better access to credit through the revolving fund the salt farmers are not depending on outside loans with high interest rates. The forming of institutions helped create a platform of identity and fraternity among the salt farmers apart from delivering the benefits of collectivization.

These interventions can be replicated in other salt zones with customizations as needed. Improvements in institutions, credit access and market stand out as key. ☺

# Livelihoods in Tradition?

## Happy Summer Holidays!

Dr BR Ambedkar Birthday, Ramanavami, May Day, and Jatras marked the month that went by.

May symbolizes Hot Summer and tests our stamina. Travel and no power during the day, the test can be grueling.

Thinking about sustainability of people's institutions, going beyond meeting the credit needs of the poor, inducting the cutting-edge development workers into livelihoods and fine-tuning Management Information System for various players in the Cotton Textile Supply Chain, have taken the bulk of our time.

We needed to respond to the articulated need for distance education in livelihoods. Some thought, discussions and effort have taken us to initiate Akshara Adhyayan to offer self-learning livelihoods programs.

I have spent some time in a village recently to participate in its once-in-five-year Mother Goddess Jatra/Festival. A village of 1000 families is estimated to have about 50000 persons spending time in the village for 2-3 days. The expenditure incurred is in more than Rs.20 million. The major expenditure is on consumption of food, meat, alcohol and clothes. A lot of travel cost is also there. Interesting rituals are part of the festival. The main deities (in their original form) (goddesses) move out of the temple, in a procession to the tank outside (may be for their bath), and return to the centre of the village to a decorated pandal. Most of the families in the village offer 'turmeric rice' to them. The offerings in cash, apart from Rice, Clothes, Jewellery etc., to the deities have crossed Rs.2 lakh on that occasion alone. Then, the families of the brothers of the sisters offer 'turmeric rice' along with clothes. By about midnight, the deities move to the temple. This is in sharp contrast with other temples where the main diety does not move out of the temple at all. Most people are awake the

whole night to see the kalyanam and 'bali' (**animal sacrifice**). There are traditional cultural activities throughout the night. Interestingly, the kalyanam of the goddesses is with the Gods in coconut form. My repeated enquiries about the 'bride grooms' could not get a response. When the Goddess is Adi Parasakthi, who is her husband, remained a mystery to me. Then, the animal blood is sprinkled all across the village boundary. Till that time, nobody is allowed to go out of the village. The celebrations Eating, Drinking, Masti - follow.

Some 3000 sheep/goats have become the meat. Lots of Alcohol and Toddy has flowed. Most of the other shops (like bangles, sweets etc.) put up specially for the occasion are owned and manned by Muslims. The main priest to perform the kalyanam is a dalit. The temple priest is from a backward caste. Most artisans have some role or the other to play. The expenditures have more than doubled vis-à-vis festival five years ago.

## Perspectives

G. Muralidhar

**All this tells us that the rituals do contribute to the livelihoods in both ways and we need to work on tailoring them or evolving new ones so that the livelihoods of the poor get enhanced.**

The cyclone in Myanmar has killed more than 60000 people so far and 1.5 million people have been affected badly. The relief is coming but the ruling junta is not allowing the relief. Fortunately, they are allowing India to help. This is considered to be the gravest cyclone in 15 years.

India boasts of a huge coastline, more than 8000 kilometers. More than 10% of India, say 120 million people live on the coast (within a range of 25km). They live myriad livelihoods. While a majority of the families are marginalized and vulnerable, prosperity is not absent. Lush green delta lands, Coconut gardens, Plantations, Beach Resorts, Ports, occasional industrial belts etc., are also part of the coastline. Three metros – Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata - are on the coast. Some Tier-2 cities are also on the coast like Visakhapatnam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, etc. But the marginalized communities of the coast live in between. They constitute some 30 million. The lives and livelihoods of these people on the coastline present a picture of highest vulnerability. The fishermen, the salt workers, marginal farmers with saline lands, people on the coastline prone to low-pressure, cyclones and tsunamis – all of them are included here. Literacy levels are low. Lower diversity in the livelihoods portfolio of each family is the norm. Cooperatives and Panchayat Raj Institutions are not working. Yet the presence of strong traditional institutions is there in almost all the villages. The issue is how we could facilitate them to have decent portfolio of livelihoods that offers them remunerative enough income with less risks. Related issue is





how we could reduce their expenditure without compromising the quality of life. Their economic oppression and their vulnerabilities have made them strong in certain aspects of life. These can be leveraged. Sure enough, like the spectrum in mainstream, there exists a spectrum in the coastline marginalized. Like every body else, coastal marginalized should acquire meta(fishing) skills so that they have insights, skills and tools to identify the gaps and opportunities and build up one's capacities towards tapping them. The numbers are large. This is a good base for further action.

It is amply clear that all the marginalized in the coast are not a homogenous lot. Their livelihoods patterns vary. Some carry a burden of generations on them. They need infrastructure to unburden themselves. They need security against natural calamities. They need safety nets. They need disaster preparedness and mechanisms to cope with disasters, before, during and after. They need space. They need to have some additional capitals. They display, it appears, stamina and mental toughness to face difficulties and uncertainties, better than many others. One needs to leverage this.

**Climate changes affect them badly.** Due to changing climate, the natural disasters have become more frequent, and more uncertain, with more severity and intensity. The traditional safe zones are becoming disaster-prone. For the fishermen, the catch is coming down. The markets are dynamic.

'Everybody loves disasters'. The communities live lives disaster-to-disaster. The NGOs, Governments, Donors etc., it appears, look forward to disasters. We have many a sincere civil society organization, that has evolved from their relief work in disasters.

Politically, we are seeing elections in Karnataka and by-elections in Telangana. All of us are eagerly awaiting the results. This will have a bearing on the landscape of AP and India. After presenting the election budget, the governments have taken a step back, faced with rising inflation and price

rise. If they crack this, the elections will be coming. The livelihoods the elections offer are immense. I will delve deep into this in my subsequent columns. Many people get lucrative assignments including journalists, consultants, researchers, painters, e-communicators, advertisers, channels, vote-mongers, processionists, activists, so on and so forth. Already our friends in political parties have started their campaigns for the general elections. Chandrababu started 150-day 'meekosam' (for you) campaign. Rahul Gandhi – his discover India campaigns. Campaign Chariots - Chaitanya Rathams are coming up. Chranjeevi has been planning to start the party with a clean image – many of his fans will get political livelihoods. Lok Satta has become a party with 'citizens are rulers'. More parties are opening shops making the scene cluttered. Let us see what happens.

**Surely, some people have improved livelihoods although for a short period!**

The exploration of MFI area and clients suggest that the Micro-finance is getting saturated with many players and people availing credit from multiple formal sources. The need for each and every MFI to have niche in future is clearly coming out. If one picks up livelihoods agenda for this niche, some ideas that offer potential are -

- ♦ businesses of sourcing raw materials, value-addition and marketing of the products of the poor
- ♦ universal interventions to market/distribute food and other essential items of the poor
- ♦ businesses that supply materials to the groups of micro-entrepreneurs and shop keepers and traders
- ♦ encouraging entrepreneurs to start enterprises that provide products and services to the poor
- ♦ linking one cluster to other cluster of producers that have dependency on each other
- ♦ providing finance for jobs and credit to swap existing high-cost debts
- ♦ Responsible growth demands responsible and concerned cutting-edge and integrating professionals to work with the communities, their organizations and their support organizations. We also need paraprofessionals and other service providers, and some 'structure' to hold them.
- ♦ Mechanisms for Social securities to the poor and the growth engines
- ♦ Figuring out areas of competitive advantage for the poor, in the context of globalization and encouraging

With this in context, Akshara pursues its dream to reach out to at least 50 million poor families, serviced by at least 10,000 livelihoods professionals and 100,000 paraprofessionals/community facilitators. ☺

# The 'tidal' Livelihoods

About 250 million people make a living within a range of 50 km, along the coast of India that is about 8000 km approximately. Coastal livelihoods for major part are akin to the livelihoods practiced in the hinterland, both urban and rural areas, except for a few like fishing, salt farming, coastal plantations, coconut cultivation, cashew cultivation, shell crafts etc that are predominantly found in coastal areas. Of the 250 million about 80 per cent are engaged in livelihoods that are urban-based port-based, tourist-based, service-based, land-based (fertile delta), large scale commercial fishing or dairy etc. This 80 per cent are not discussed here. The remaining 20 per cent are the poor living along the coast depending on resources between the cities and deltas and one of the most marginalized sections of the country. They face all kinds of problems like their counterparts in the hinterland. In addition, being right on the coast itself, they place themselves at the mercy of nature. Their livelihoods carry a huge risk.



India has a coastline of about 8000 km including the islands spread across the Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep archipelagos. The coastline comprises of headlands, promontories, rocky shores, sandy spits, barrier beaches, open beaches, embayment, estuaries, inlets, bays, marshy land and offshore islands.

The Eastern Coastal Plain is a wide stretch of land lying between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal. It stretches from Tamil Nadu in the south to West Bengal in the north. The width of the plains varies between 100 to 130 km. Deltas of many of India's rivers form a major portion of these plains. The Mahanadi, Godavari, Kaveri and Krishna rivers drain these plains. The plains are divided into six regions: The Mahanadi delta; the southern Andhra Pradesh plain; the Krishna Godavari deltas; the Kanyakumari coast; Coromandel Coast and sandy coastal. The region receives both the Northeast and Southwest monsoon rains with its annual rainfall averaging between 1,000 mm (40 in) and 3,000 mm (120 in). The east coast is also endowed with extensive mangrove wetlands that are high in diversity and the water bodies associated with the mangroves are characterized by the presence of larger brackish water bodies and complex networks of tidal creeks and canals. The Sunderbans and Mahanadi mangroves are tide-dominated while the rest are river-dominated.



The Western Coastal Plain is a narrow strip of land sandwiched between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. The strip begins in Gujarat in the north and extends across the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Kerala. The plains are narrow, and range from 50 to 100 km in width. Small rivers and numerous backwaters inundate the region. The rivers, which originate in the Western Ghats, are fast flowing and are mostly perennial. The fast flowing nature of the rivers results in the formation of estuaries rather than deltas. Major rivers flowing into the sea are the Tapi, Narmada, Mandovi and Zuari. The coast is divided into three regions. The northern region of Maharashtra and Goa is known as the Konkan Coast, the central region of Karnataka is known as the Kanara Coast and the southern coastline of Kerala is known as the Malabar Coast. Vegetation in this region is mostly deciduous. The Malabar Coast has its own unique eco-region known as the Malabar Coast moist forests. Rainfall in the west coast is almost double that of the east. The west coast being narrow and steep in slope has mangroves that are smaller in size and less in diversity. While the east coast boasts of 56.7 per cent of the mangrove

wetlands in India the west coast has only about 23.5 per cent.

The geographical differences between the west coast and east coast significantly influence the livelihoods in the two regions. The deep waters of Bay of Bengal provide scope of large variety of fish and in large numbers compared to the Arabian Sea which is shallow. Similarly the deltas of east coast are suitable for paddy cultivation whereas the west coast provides more room for spices, rubber and coconut plantations, cashew etc. Salt farming is more predominant in areas where the width of the plains is large. The states of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh top the list in salt production. In the context of risk, Bay of Bengal is more prone to cyclonic storms than the Arabian sea. Also more people dwell on the coastline in the east coast compared to the west coast and hence suffer more losses in times of natural calamities. It is sad to note that a cheaper coastal water transport system from Kolkata to Chennai through Buckingham canal has disappeared with time.

Studies indicate that 20 per cent of the Indian coast comprises of marginalized people practicing livelihoods common with hinterland like wage labour, services, growing of vegetables and flowers, dairying, paddy cultivation and coast specific livelihoods like fishing, salt farming, coconut cultivation, coir making, casuarinas cultivation etc. The land being mostly saline the productivity of vegetables, paddy and fodder and the like, is less compared to that in hinterland. Also taken up on the coast are sea weed cultivation and sea shell handicraft.

About 1 per cent of the population in India depend on fishing sector as a primary source of livelihood. Of this 1 per cent about half depend on coastal marine fisheries. Fisheries provide direct employment to more than 6 million and



According to a report, *Outlook for Fish to 2020: meeting global demand*, released by the WorldFish Center and International Food Policy Research Institute, developing countries in 20 years will be responsible for 77% of fish consumption globally and 79% of world production. India's fish production will grow to nearly 8 million tonnes.



another 6 million are employed in fishery related activities. India has an estimated marine resource potential of about 3.9 million tonnes per year.

Among the poor, men are engaged mostly in catching fish, while the women are engaged in selling small quantities of fresh fish and dry fish. While 70 per cent of the catch is marketed fresh, only about 14 per cent is dried. Women are also engaged as wage labourers in processing activities.

The boats used are either motorized/non-motorized or mechanized. The pattern of sharing differs between motorized/non-motorized to mechanized fishing. In the small-scale boats the crew generally receive a share of the catch

## Craft-based Livelihoods of India on the Coast

The vast coastline of India is studded with varied crafts and dedicated craftsmen many of them similar to those practiced in hinterland, creating livelihoods for many. While some of the crafts use sea products like shells as inputs many use inputs that are not directly related to the sea. Some of the crafts are of recent origin while many are quite ancient.

In **West Bengal**, in Kolkata and Midnapore, sankharis or conch shell workers practice the age old craft of slicing conch shells with simple hand tools and making bangles, bracelets and range of ornaments. Also produced here is mother-of-pearl cutlery and jewellery. Kolkatta coast is also famous for leather goods. The tooled leather patterns and batik work in leather makes the products strikingly different. At Howrah craftsmen use raw material obtained from the stems and roots of aquatic plant (sholapith) and make garlands, dolls, images of gods and goddesses. The raw material looks like ivory in color and texture. Hoogley specializes in folk toys, chikan embroidery, cane and bamboo furniture and jute articles. One of the oldest craft, Dhokra metal casting is practiced in Midnapore.

In the coastal state of **Orissa**, there are stone carvers working on sandstone and soapstone with classical techniques. Puri is known for brass icons, wood masks and detachable toys. There are chitrakars specialized in patachitras, the renowned cloth folk paintings.

Down South of Orissa, **Andhra Pradesh** is known for its refined tradition of coastal crafts. The craft of Kalamkari (print on cloth with local vegetable dyes) in Machilipatnam is recorded even before Christian era. The place is also famous for gold covering.

Further South, in the state of **Tamil Nadu**, Pondicherry is known for Puducheri Bommai - dolls and toys made from terracotta and plaster of paris. This coastal union territory is also known for five metal puja lamps - kamatchi villakku, handloom cloth, hand-woven carpets, hand printed textiles, cane furniture, hand made paper and incense sticks etc. Chennai is a multi-craft city with crafts ranging from cane works, weaving, horn work, musical instruments, sea shell products etc. Mahabalipuram is known for stone-carving. The craftsmen at Tambaram and Nachiarkol excel in moulding metalware. At Kanyakumari women make items with dyed palm leaves and aluminum foil.

In **Kerala**, Cochin, Ernakulam, Tirchur and Thiruvananthapuram are reputed for wooden carvings made out of sandal wood, cedar wood and rosewood.

Up north of Kerala, in **Karnataka** wood carving continues as a predominant craft. Mangalore is known for its jewellery while Mangalore and Udipi together produce item of brass and copper. The women of Coorg produce hand embroidered textiles.

In **Maharashtra**, crafts are concentrated in Mumbai. Dharavi acquired popularity for painted black pottery and hand painted glazed tiles. Several items are made of sisal and also cane and bamboo. Miraj is known for its musical string instruments.

**Dadra and Nagar Haveli** are known for leather slippers, bamboo products and articles made of greenish gold torpe grass. **Daman and Diu** are known for mat weaving and tortoise shell and ivory carving.

**Gujarat**, the northern most state on the west coast of India is known for its coastal crafts like mirror and embroidery works, silver works, tie and dye printing. Pataras, large decorative chests are made at Bhavnagar and Mahuva. Porbander is known for its Patola weaves. Surat is the most important zari manufacturing center in India. Other specialties of Surat include, wood carving, marquetry work and silver work.

The **Gulf of Cambay** earned famed for its hand crafts articles and ornaments of agate.

while in the mechanized sector the crew receive a wage.

There is a kind of 'Patron-Client' relationship that develops between the poor fisherman and the business community.



Many a time the fishermen take high interest loans from the local middlemen for buying nets or for consumption purposes and are forced to sell their catch at the source to the middlemen. There are instances where the fisherman cannot retain even a portion of his catch for consumption. He instead buys cheap fish from elsewhere.

The fish market is very unregulated with no minimum prices fixed for species, no product differentiation, no control on quality standards etc. Few players dictate the terms and conditions of the trade.

Between the producer (fisherman) and the end market the price of fish many times sees a quantum jump and at times this jump is as high as 500 per cent. The players like middle man, auction agent and commission agent are the dominant non value added players who because of their forward linkages and credit leverage capture the trade.

The infrastructure facilities at the fisherman level are poor. Even basic amenities like weighing machines, landing platform, icing facilities are absent except for few landing

centers. And where the facilities exist the control is mostly with the big players. Much of the infrastructure development has happened to cater to export market and not the livelihoods of the fisherman.

The advent of trawlers is not only hurting the marine environment but also considerably reduced the catch of the traditional fisherman. It is increasingly converting the poor from being fishermen to wage labour in fishing. Natural calamities like tsunami, cyclones cause a huge dent in the livelihoods of the fishing communities. Loss of property and loss of days of fishing make things worse.

The older people and single women are vulnerable groups among the poor fishing communities. They have to depend on others catch to sell in small quantities and lose out from getting decent bargains.

In addition to the above problems, new claims of modernization and globalization like tourism, industrial and port development, oil exploration, environment conservation are working against the traditional rights of the fishing communities.

Another livelihood vividly seen on the coast is salt production. India is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest salt making country in the world producing about 18 mt a year. There are more than 1, 50,000 salt workers in India and they broadly fall into three categories - those hired by a land leaseholder who owns the salt pan, or hired by contractor or those that take sub-lease



themselves with a buy back system.

The salt workers if anything are the unsung beasts of burden. The salt pans lie in the desert and coastal areas and salt workers work in the scorching sun. Salt pans provide work for about eight months in a year. Most of them operate on no-work-no-pay basis. Lack of year round employment forces them to take money from local moneylenders at high interest rates.

The salt workers face the risk of blindness, blood pressure, skin lesions, knee injury, back pain etc. The wages they get are low and no where commensurate with the risk in their

### CRZ (Coastal Zone Regulation)

The Government declares the coastal stretches of seas, bays, estuaries, creeks, rivers and backwaters which are influenced by tidal action in the landward side up to 500m from the High Tide Line and the land between the Low Tide Line and High Tide Line as Coastal Regulation Zone. Activities like setting up of new industries or expansion of existing ones, handling hazardous substances, setting up/expansion of fish processing units, disposal of waste and effluents, discharge of untreated waste etc are prohibited in the CRZ.

The coastal stretches within 500 m of High Tide Line on the landward side are classified into four categories-

CRZ I - 1. Areas that are ecologically sensitive and important, such as national parks/marine parks, sanctuaries, reserve forests, wildlife habitats, mangroves, corals/coral reefs, areas close to breeding and spawning grounds of fish and other marine life, areas of outstanding natural beauty/historically/heritage areas, areas rich in genetic diversity, areas likely to be inundated due to rise in sea level consequent upon global warming and such other areas as may be declared by the Central Government or the concerned authorities at the State/Union Territory level from time to time. 2. Area between the Low Tide Line and the High Tide Line.

CRZ II - The areas that have already been developed upto or close to the shore-line.

CRZ III - Areas that are relatively undisturbed and those which do not belong to either Category-I or II.

CRZ IV - Coastal stretches in the Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep and small islands, except those designated as CRZ-I, CRZ-II or CRZ-III.

The CRZ received applause from environmentalists, traditional fisher folks, wildlife activists. However the implementation of the regulation was marred with violations. Further the government repeatedly amended the CRZ to suit various players, thus diluting the original intent of the notification. States have been tardy in finalizing Coastal Zone Management Plans.

### Swaminathan Committee Report

In 2004 Swaminathan Committee was constituted to enable the Ministry of Environment and Forests to back its coastal regulations with scientific principles and to devise regulations to meet the needs of coastal conservation and development and livelihood needs. Principally, the Swaminathan Report recommends -

1. A rationalization of management boundaries based on coastal vulnerability,
2. Moving away from mere 'regulation' to the larger concept of 'integrated management' and replacing the categories of 'Coastal Regulation Zones' with 'Coastal Management Zones', based on ecological importance, coastal vulnerability, and other socio-cultural concerns.
3. Creating a new institutional structure specifically geared for coastal management, including the establishment of a National Institute for Sustainable Coastal Zone Management..

## Case Study of a Coastal Village

The village Puvanithopu is located in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu. All the families here belong to SC community. The nearest market is Vedaranyam. The institutional infrastructure in the village includes one VDC (Village Development Council) and 11 SHGs. About 95 per cent of the people here work as daily labour in the salt pans which provide work for 7 months in a year. The remaining months they are engaged as agricultural labour which provides employment for about 70 to 90 days. 7 families are engaged in fishing for their livelihood. Other livelihoods in the village include running petty shops, making bamboo baskets etc.

The salt workers take loans from salt farmers to meet their needs during off-season and this puts the salt workers in a state of perpetual debt. Also during off-season the salt workers buy salt from the farmer at Rs.350 per tonne. In this they mix 1 kilo of iodine, provided for free by UNICEF to 100 tonnes of salt and make 10000 bags. A lorry is used to transport the bags to the market and a rent of Rs.2500 is paid for this. Currently the salt workers use very primitive methods of storing salt like toddy leaves. This results in wastage.

The village indicated high expenditure on vegetables, high costs for servicing loans and high expenditure on liquor.

livelihood. The salt owners sell at Rs.300 to 350 per metric tonne while the workers get as low as Rs.5 per metric tonne. Salt workers in the small salt pans are worse off than the organized salt workers. They are paid less in the name of quality. They also do not have access to even basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation, rest sheds and protective gear, mobile clinics and schools for children are a distant cry. There is no specific act to govern the conditions of salt workers. The Salt Cess Act is silent on this aspect.

India accounts for about 22 per cent of world's coconut production. Coconut farming and associated activities provide food and livelihood security to more than 10 million people in India. Coconut is a permanent source of raw material for many oil mills, coir industries, Desiccated Coconut industries and other industries like Activated Carbon manufacturing industries, shell powder manufacturing units, solvent extraction units etc which provide continuous employment to nearly 6.5 lakh workers of which 80 per cent are women folk. The ever increasing fragmentation of coconut holdings make them unviable to adopt scientific management practices resulting in lower levels of returns per unit holdings. Majority of the coconut holding in the country are rain-fed and hence vulnerable to the vagaries of the monsoon.

The government has support price for copra but not green coconut and therefore the support price do not benefit the farmer. Further the farmer gets only 30 per cent of the consumer price of the coconut because he/she is ill-equipped to undertake any value addition activities.

Many in the coconut producing areas are engaged in making coir and coir products. Coconut husk is the basic raw material for coir. While men are mostly engaged in procurement of raw material the women are involved in the process of threshing. Working in backwaters for longer periods of time to process the coconuts result in breathing related health problems. The requirement of soaking coconut husk in water



for 6 months increases working capital requirements and this increases the coir workers dependence on informal money market. Further, the coir workers is not skilled in making any value addition and is losing out on that front. Large players dominate the coir product markets.

Casuarinas plantation is another important source of livelihood for the marginal farmer on the coast. It's a short rotation cash crop that demands little investment. It's a good source of fuel and is also used as building material. Casuarinas are promoted by the government as vegetation for shelterbelts to protect the coasts from the natural calamities. The paper mills also use casuarinas as raw material and there is great scope for the casuarinas farmers to realize higher prices for their crop. But currently the access for the farmer to the paper mill market is absent. The middlemen have captured the slot.

Seaweeds are collected manually from their natural habitats. This harvesting is one of the important sources of livelihood to the coastal fisher-folk community. Seaweed collections are mainly centered along the southeastern coast of India from Rameswaram to Kanyakumarai. In India, seaweeds are utilized by the industries, mainly for commercial production of agar and alginate. Seaweed cultivation is still in the evolving stages in India. Taken up as an economic activity, it can provide good source of supplemental income for the poor on the coast.

Sea shell handicraft can be good source of income for the aged, women and infirm on the coast. Tourist places provide good market for this handicraft. Many a time the shells are collected by the old who stay in the backwaters for long time. At the market level, there is no direct link between the craftsmen and the customers and therefore the craftsmen remain cut-off from direct customer feedback. Further, the craftsmen depend on shops for selling his craft. The shopkeeper makes payments only after the articles are sold. This means a long wait for the craftsmen to see the actual money.

There is lot of scope to make interventions in the coastal livelihoods so that the poor and the marginalized at the losing end of the value chain can swim the tide with less drudgery, more support and better information. For now livelihoods on the coast practiced by the poor, remain severely cut off from the market. This can change. Youth not willing to continue in the traditional livelihoods need alternative opportunities. Can we all, as responsible stakeholders in the development arena, do something to change the marginalized coastal lives for better? ☺



## “We Swim the Seas...”

Changes are happening. Lives and lifestyles of fishing villages are changing. New livelihoods and new methods of practicing the existing livelihoods are emerging. Konduri Sitamma says one has to be aware of the changes and act accordingly. Only then the world will be ours.

**Ch. Ramesh** interviews Sitamma to get insights into the life of a fishing family.

**Question:** Sitamma, please tell us about your family?

**Answer:** My husband's name is Jalaiah and he is 50 years old. We have three daughters and one son. We belong to a caste called Pattapu. Our primary livelihood is marine fishing. Earlier my husband used to go out for fishing. But now he does not go to the sea anymore. Now we are engaged in selling dry fish. My son works on a tractor.

**Q:** What is the change you witnessed in the last 10 years in the fishing families in your village?

**A:** Sea is our biggest resource. Our lives are very closely associated with the sea. 10 years ago our villages had small wooden boats, we used small nets and were living in small huts. We used to sleep right on the shores of the sea. Our staple diet comprised of Ragi balls and fish curry. It is simply impossible for hinterland folks to understand our struggle in times of cyclones. We met our daily expenditure by selling the catch.

Since then lot of changes happened in our villages. Fiber boats for fishing are increasingly seen. Many types of nets are now available in the market. Earlier we would catch fish only for 6 months in a year. Now its almost an year round activity. The demand for fish increased significantly. As a result it has become a luxury for us to consume our catch. Our children are going to schools. Some people are picking up alternative livelihoods like agriculture, petty business etc.

**Q:** Are the youth interesting in doing fishing?

**A:** Very few youth show interest. However many of us are not educated and therefore we are not appropriately qualified for taking up jobs. In our village not a single person from our community is doing a good job. Youth are increasingly taking up driving, mechanic works, petty businesses and agriculture. Even my son learnt driving a tractor. He purchased a old tractor and does contract works.

**Q:** Can you give us more details about your family's fishing business?

**A:** We buy fresh fish from our village and also from surrounding villages. We dry some fish after soaking them in salt. Some fish we dry as is without soaking in salt. We purchase some non-palatable fish and use them as poultry feed. We also send them to Hyderabad and places in Orissa. The palatable fish are taken in trucks and sold in the markets of Chandole, Tadepalligudem and Renigunta. Sometimes we also sell fish in the nearby markets and shandies. Myself and my husband share the work equally.

**Q:** How much do you have to invest in the fish business. How much profit will you get?

**A:** We used to do Rs.15 to 20 lakh business every year. Part of the investment we put from our own resources and part

we borrowed from SHGs and local money lenders. If we have a big order we take fish from the fishermen and settle the amount only after selling the fish. At times we take advance from people who ordered for fish and give that money as advance to the fisherman. I cannot say clearly about profits. It varies. Sometimes we get money and sometimes we loose.

**Q:** What was your family's position earlier? How did you reach the present stage?

**A:** About 10 to 15 years back our family was deeply drowned in problems. With three daughters and little income and high expenditure it was difficult to make ends meet. But I decided to do something and took the initiative to reduce expenditure by whatever I can. I was able to cut the expenditure by about 50 per cent. We started selling fish on a small scale. We borrowed money to start business. We got some profits and we never looked back since then. Our business expanded. All the three daughters are married. Son also got married and the daughter-in-law also shares our workload today.

**Q:** Did you get help from the Government?

**A:** After tsunami, we got SHG loan.

**Q:** Is your business doing well now? Are you facing any problems?

**A:** Our business is doing okay. The problems come during rainy season. Drying fish is difficult during rains. But the demand for dry fish is more and we are unable to meet the demand. In summer there is plenty of opportunity to dry fish but at the time the demand is less. The investment is quite huge but the returns are not proportionate. Further the competition is huge. In spite of all this the business is going on.

**Q:** You are playing a major role in earning money for your family. How has the community reacted to this?

**A:** Social norms are very stringent in our community. It was even rigid 20 years back. Women were not allowed to go outside the house. But now things have changed, people changed. Men are encouraging women to take part in family responsibilities. Even women are more aware of what is happening in the world.

**Q:** What would you suggest to others?

**A:** We should be wise. This is more so with our fishing communities where we face lot of exploitation in the hands of middlemen and traders. We should be aware of changes happening outside our families and villages. We need to get a grasp of broader picture. We need to get educated. Only then the world will be ours.

We swim the tides, we swim the seas, therefore can't we swim across the problems! 🌊

# Fisheries

India's share in global fish production is 4.36%. The potential to increase is present and can be explored. Infrastructure development is needed to improve post-harvest handling.

Indian fish biodiversity in terms of over 2,200 fish and shellfish species in the marine, brackish water, freshwater and cold water environments is a rich and diverse resource available with few countries in the world. India is endowed with vast fisheries resources in terms of a coast line of 8,118 km and 2.02 million km<sup>2</sup> of Exclusive Economic Zone, including. The inland fisheries resources include rivers and canals, reservoirs, floodplain wetlands, estuaries, freshwater and brackish water bodies.

The annual fish production in India was over 6.3 mt during 2004-05. Of this, marine fish production was 2.78 mt, and that of inland fish was 3.52 mt. Fisheries and aquaculture contribute 1.04% of the national GDP. The total output of fisheries sector was Rs. 31,672 crores during 2003-04 with net domestic product valued at Rs. 27,026 crores.

Indian share in global production has reached 4.36 per cent. For inland sector India is ranked second after China. Indian share in the global trade was 6.5% in 2003. Frozen shrimp, a high-value item, has become the dominant seafood export.

Fisheries and aquaculture provide for diversification as well as value addition in farming practices. They enable optimisation of water productivity in different situations including ponds, tanks, lakes, canal systems, water logged and waste lands derelict waters. Non-water-consumptive nature of aquaculture, its compatibility with other farming systems and neutrality to scale of investments, enable integrated fish farming on a large scale.

In case of inland waters, fisheries in open waters have high potentials for production enhancement. The fish catches from these waters contribute significantly to food and nutritional security.

The six major fishing harbours are located at Cochin, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Roychowk (Calcutta), Paradip and Sassoon dock (Mumbai).

## Demand

The important marine fish in the mid-1990s are mackerel,

sardines, Bombay duck, shark, ray, perch, croaker, carangid, sole, ribbonfish, whitebait, tuna, silverbelly, prawn, and cuttlefish. The main freshwater fish are carp and catfish; the main brackish-water fish are hilsa and mullet.



Demand for fish and fishery products is increasing considerably, both at domestic and export fronts. The projected demand for fish in the country by 2012 is 9.74 million t, that can be met by the projected supply of fish at 9.60 million t by 2012 with major share of 5.34 million t from inland aquaculture followed by 3.10 million t from marine fisheries.

## Government Departments and Research Agencies

The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries, implements seven schemes under two broad heads, 'Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture' and 'Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post harvest operations'. The seven schemes relate to: Development of marine fisheries, Development of inland fisheries and aquaculture, Marine infrastructure and post harvest operations, Strengthening of database and IT scheme, Welfare of fishermen and training & extension, Fisheries institutes and National Fisheries Development Board.

The research institutes/Boards working in the fisheries sector include, Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture, Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fishery, Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institutes, Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institutes, National Research

## Value-chain of Inland Freshwater Fish Production in Reservoirs

Preparation for getting Inputs	Inputs	Pre-Production	Production	Local Value Addition	Marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Meetings of fisherman cooperative society to decide on the seed requirement and request the same from fisheries dept</li> <li>◆ Collection of money for seed from the members and depositing the same with the members</li> <li>◆ Collecting the seed from the nursery and transporting to the village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Seed</li> <li>◆ Nets</li> <li>◆ Wooden craft</li> <li>◆ Plastic craft</li> <li>◆ Investment in seeds and feed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Release of seed in the presence of members</li> <li>◆ Vigil on fish health and other growth in the reservoir</li> <li>◆ Vigil to check illegal fishing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Fishing</li> <li>◆ Unloading the fish on the bund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Segregation and grading of fish</li> <li>◆ Putting the fish in ice boxes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Sale to local vendors</li> <li>◆ Transport to nearby towns</li> <li>◆ Lift off to distant markets in insulated vans by prior arrangements with a large trader</li> </ul>

Centre on Cold Water Fisheries, Fishery Survey of India, Integrated Fisheries Project.

In the recent Policy on Farmers adopted by the Government of India, the fishermen are also treated as farmers. With this recognition, the subsidies and support that flow into agriculture would also accrue to the fishermen.

### Issues

Special efforts need to be made to improve productivity of reservoirs in India. The fish yields from these reservoirs have remained in the range of 12-15 kg/ha in case of large and medium ones while it is 50 kg/ha in small reservoirs. In contrast, yield of more than 800 kg/ha are reported from the reservoirs of other countries in Asia, especially China.

High perishability of fish coupled with poor post-harvest handling has led to high losses, even to the extent of 15%, in both marine and inland fisheries.

The fisheries is under pressure due to intense fishing, pollution, open-access, man-made modifications, drawing of water beyond acceptable limits, etc. and lead to problems in maintaining sustainable fisheries. Reports from the coast of Kerala pointed out the devastating effects of trawl fishing that kill and destroy an average 2.5 lakh tones of marine organisms annually. Trawling also causes serious perturbation at sea bottom. The government imposed a ban on monsoon trawling, but as the ban is not imposed on traditional fishermen, the situation lead to social tensions and weakening of social ties.

### Trawling Damages



Presently, fisheries of the island systems, Andamans and Lakshadweep, as well as the deep sea resources, including the tunas, are highly under-exploited. Interactions with fishermen in Visakhapatnam fishing harbour indicated that people with skills to go on board deep sea vessels were not easily available. People with skills to service the mechanized trawlers were even scarcer. The repair of FRPs was possible, but the lack of adequate service personnel hinders quick turnaround of FRPs with damage. This reduces the productivity of the FRPs.

There is a need to encourage processing for both export and domestic markets. The future of fisheries export would be influenced by the consistent compliance with food safety measures (HACCP and SPS standards). Cost of implementation of these measures has shown a scale biasness and has worked against smaller Plants. This requires government policies and support system to be designed to minimize the cost of compliance with international standards to make smaller plants viable and export-competitive. Efforts also need to be made to develop trained workforce to support expansion of fish processing.

There is a requirement for more landing sites and approach roads to these landing sites. Effective marketing system in identified areas is a key requirement for the development of this sector.

In the case of fishing in reservoirs:

- ♦ The fishermen cooperatives are not strong giving room for private parties.
- ♦ Low involvement of fisheries department.
- ♦ Lack of coordination between the irrigation department and fisheries department. The fishers do not get prior information about water releases and de-silting operations.

In the case of aquaculture:

- ♦ Quality of seeds and availability of seeds on time is a issue.
- ♦ Losses during floods

In the case of riverine fishing:

- ♦ STs are engaged in this activity. But not many receive assistance from the ST Corporation for crafts.

In the case of coastal fishing:

- ♦ Inadequate infrastructure
- ♦ Sale to the middlemen in lieu of credit given for purchase of net.
- ♦ Nets are major cost item in fishing. These need to be changed within a year. Up to 30% of the cost on nets can saved by collective purchase of the nets directly from the manufacturers.
- ♦ Insurance to the persons, boats/catamarans/FRPs, and huts.
- ♦ Personnel required to service the on-board motors and FRPs are not present in adequate numbers.
- ♦ In the absence of approach up to the landing site, the women have to bring the catch up to the village by carrying the fish on head loads.
- ♦ Identity cards for fishermen on FRPs, particularly near the international border.
- ♦ Information support about zones of fish availability is at present not available to the small fishermen. This needs to be looked into.
- ♦ Provision of on-board lighting using renewable energy sources; preferably using LEDs for light source.
- ♦ Grading (among the same kind of fish) could be improved.

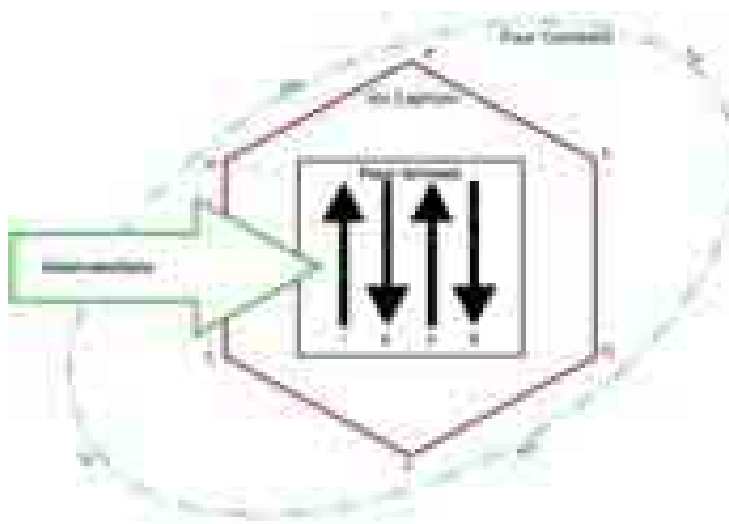
The other concerns pertain to trans-boundary fisheries issues, inland & coastal pollution, large-scale sedimentation of rivers, estuaries & lakes/wetlands, effective compliance of code of conduct of responsible fisheries, increasing input costs of water and power, high marine fishing costs & low profitability, mechanization in fisheries and aquaculture, overseas market fluctuations, disaster management, credit and insurance, inadequate database and poor linkage in domestic marketing, hatchery establishment and seed production, seed certification, certified brood banks for food and ornamental fishes under freshwater aquaculture.

Areas with promise that need to be supported in order to achieve diversification in terms of non-food fisheries are ornamental fisheries, seaweed, pearl culture, aqua-tourism, sport fisheries and molluscan fisheries for ornamental purposes. ☺

Value chain analysis is examination of different stages in a good or service till it reaches the customer. In the value chain analysis, backward and forward linkages are studied for appropriate interventions. The idea is to identify gaps and possible

# Livelihoods Postulates

*Livelihoods are a play of Six Capitals towards Four Arrows within the Four Contexts. A household uses six capitals (own or accessed) to make a living, which consists of four arrows - income, expenditure, employment (days of labour) and risk. The ability of the household to convert the capitals to provide for the four arrows is determined by the four contexts in which the household and community are present. These contexts offer scope as well as limit the options available to the household to pursue the set of activities to make a living. A household would endeavour to improve these four arrows.*



*The appraisal of the current reality of the livelihoods is the first step in the process of designing a livelihoods intervention. This assessment can be carried out using participatory tools, which are collectively called Livelihoods Enhancement Action Plan tools. However, before we begin the assessment using LEAP tools, we need to keep in mind some principles/postulates which are at the root of the livelihoods framework.*

*The principles below help us in appreciating the nuances in the livelihoods of the people better.*

## Poor have multiple livelihoods.

Study after study has shown that the poor have multiple livelihoods. A study by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo indicated that the median family has 3 working members and seven occupations. Our own experience confirms similar tendency, both in the urban and rural areas. In many cases, specially in the rural areas, poor obtain some of the items they consume by hunting/gathering from the nature around them. They obtain yet some more from others by way of exchange, under a web of relationships that they enjoy. To add to complexity, the livelihoods pursued by members of households could be totally unconnected to each other.

The presence of multiple livelihoods in the family would mean that the cash flows and risks present a myriad interesting patterns. Some of these help each other, while a few elements might be working against each other. A family may not be able to articulate the interconnectedness of these livelihoods; but could have unconsciously settled at the best possible equilibrium. Changing any one element in this panorama without being conscious of the inter-relations and dependencies could damage the entire livelihoods system of the household and increase their risk.

## Poor are both producers and consumers.

Several interventions focus on adding new lines of production into the livelihoods of the poor - but do not focus on the existing production itself. As the poor are producers, a variety of interventions that focus on the existing production could benefit the poor a lot. Hence, understanding their existing lines of production and the production system in which the production happens needs to be a part of the assessment of their existing livelihoods.

In addition to consumption of inputs for the production processes, the poor have household consumption. Concentration on income generation to the total exclusion of consumption expenditure may not always yield good results.

Therefore, efforts need to be made to reduce the money spent not only on the inputs into the production processes, but also on items for household consumption. Bulking up the purchases and intermediation by a collective could help the poor a lot.

Being producers, poor can also add value. However, certain factors constrain the poor in undertaking value addition. Unless these are understood, suggestions regarding the value addition may not sustain in the long run.

## Local best practices exist and can be replicated.

Some of the producers in a particular village/production system could be producing more profitably. The higher profitability would be due to some element in the activity which the producer is doing in the best possible manner. With some little adaptation and sensitization, other can also easily replicate the practices adopted by the profitable producer. Hence, there is a need to encourage the community to identify the best practitioners, study the production processes of the best practitioners and adapt the same at a large scale.

As these practices are demonstrated in situ (or have emerged in situ), it would be easier for others to adopt these practices.

## Knowledge, skills and resources need to be integrated.

No one has complete knowledge about the livelihoods of the poor - neither the poor, nor the technical experts. Even the intervening agency would not have complete knowledge. The knowledge, skills and resources existing at the people, intervening agency and technical expert need to be put at one place, and reflected back to the community. This integration and reflection would enable the community to make informed choices and develop community based plans. This is denoted as PK + OK + OK + ? .

As the aggregation is done by the intervening agency, it

needs to possess the skills of engaging the community as well as the experts in a dialogue. Where required, the experts knowledge may have to be translated into simple terms so that the people understand the experts considerations and opinions. Similarly, the intervening agency should be able to draw the experts' focus on to issues faced by the people.

Despite the aggregation of the knowledge, skills and resources, it must be admitted that not everything related to the livelihoods of the poor can be known. There would be some elements on which none of the three have any knowledge. These issues will have to be probed further, to aid a scientific understanding of the situation.

This process of aggregation of the knowledge, skill and resource systems need to be taken up along with the assessment of the livelihoods of the poor, as this aggregation is also a part of the understanding.

#### Micro and Macro could play differently.

The livelihoods of the poor are complicated by the fact that what could be good at the micro-level may not be good at the macro-level. The interventions that gave good results when they were taken up on a smaller scale cannot be taken up with a majority. For example, one cannot scale up the intervention to service niche markets despite it being highly successful with some artisans. Similarly, some interventions may be good at present. But if a new trend emerges (as is happening in the case of globalization), the interventions may bring in a lot of risk.

Therefore, while assessing the present situation one needs to be cautious of the present trends and level of activity. Some assessment may have to be done about the level at which the activity would still be sustainable without increasing the exposure of risk to the poor.

#### Entire value-chain needs to be addressed.

The poor are but cogs in the wheels of value-chains. Their role could be that of a producer or processor or they could be merely engaged in the value chain as labour. For the poor to have a sustainable benefit, the intervention needs to address the entire value-chain; or at least the critical part of the chain. Unless this is done, the poor may not benefit out of the intervention.

There are several examples where the sectoral dynamics were not addressed during interventions and the beneficiaries became worse off as a result. The introduction of crops for export or a business house benefits the farmer only as long as the intervening agency holds its position as an interlocutor between the farmers and the marketing agencies. Once the intervening agency withdraws, the marketers start preying on the farmers. Ultimately, the farmers get squeezed. This is a well known story.

Therefore, any assessment is not complete without understanding the entire value-chain, at least the critical part of it on which the returns to the poor depend.

#### Interventions need to aim at both collective as well as individual levels.

There is a tendency on the part of the intervening agencies to favour collective solutions. But is collectivization a solution in all circumstances? There are several cases that are not suitable for collective action. This distinction (and the scope

for collective action) needs to be kept in mind while assessing the livelihoods and value chains. The idea that collectivization needs to be promoted at all costs needs to be shed.

Similarly, partnership between the poor and other agents in the value chain could be required. These partners may require different interventions. Such interconnectedness needs to be recognized and interventions tailored to promote/strengthen such partnerships may have to be promoted. We may have to engage with the partners though they are rich and they may also benefit from the interventions and investments. Strictly adhering to the policy of non-engagement with the non-poor may not work to the advantage of the poor.

#### Poor need support of service providers (activists/paraprofessionals)

Service providers have a definite role to play in several of the livelihoods taken up by the poor. However, the general access and quality of the services that reach the poor are abysmal. Hence, there is a need to promote the access to services. This could be done by training activists and paraprofessionals and establishing community systems whereby these paraprofessionals are paid for their services. These paraprofessionals could be linked to the government service providing machinery or become a market in themselves with due support and recognition from the government.

Till the time these paraprofessionals can break even, they may require some support. Systems to promote their learning and skill upgradation could be required.

#### Livelihoods of the poor are risky.

The poor are vulnerable to several shocks due to the risks in their livelihoods. Hence, one needs to go beyond mere income generation and specifically seek to understand the measures adopted by the poor to reduce the risk. These measures may appear to be shrouded in customary or traditional relationships, and the reasons for such behaviour may not be readily apparent. Therefore, there is a need to make a separate attempt to understand and map the risks faced by the poor and then intervene with risk reduction/coping mechanisms.

#### Ideas are more important than finances

In several cases, there are a lot of indigenous innovations from the best practitioners. These need to be critically examined and pointed out to others. Similarly, on several occasions, bringing in something that is happening outside can change the livelihoods options of the people. For example, tractors come with several attachments and uses. All these may not be known to the owners. Some demonstration or talk to the owners at appropriate time could change the way tractor is used. Though a simple contraption, the pulley with ball-bearings, is still not known in many villages where people depend on well water.

Bringing in ideas could be more important than scouting for money. Therefore, we need to build systems that encourage people and peoples' institutions to seek ideas and exchanges; instead of limiting themselves to funds only.

*Any appraisal of the existing livelihoods situation needs to be done keeping the above postulates in mind. ☘*

# South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies

Fishermen in India are suffering with problems of exploitation by middlemen and moneylenders, indebtedness, uncertain incomes and high risk associated with their livelihood. They belong to the most marginalized group in the society. To secure better incomes and protection to these marginalized fishermen in South West coast of India, South Indian Federation of Fishermen societies (SIFFS) was formed in 1980 as the apex body of a number of smaller artisanal fish workers organizations.

Fishermen in India are dealing with myriad problems. The problems of exploitation by middlemen and moneylenders, and indebtedness are seen across. The high risk involved in fishing and the uncertain and non-remunerative incomes add to the problems. They belong to the most marginalized group in the society. In order to secure better incomes and protection to these marginalized fishermen in South West coast of India, South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) has been formed in 1980 as the apex body of a number of smaller artisanal fish workers organizations.

SIFFS has a three tier organizational structure:

- ◆ the village societies
- ◆ the district federations and
- ◆ the apex body SIFFS

The three tiers are all autonomous units but strongly connected to each other through the exchange of information, knowledge and experiences. The higher tiers collect information and do research on specific technologies and equipment needs for fishermen.

Presently SIFFS has 100 primary societies with about 6,000 members in 8 districts of South India. SIFFS was established primarily as a fish marketing organization but now it is providing various other services to its members and non-



members. SIFFS network started in 1970 s in Marianad, 20 km away from Trivandrum. Its aim was to rehabilitate fish workers.

One of the major problems these workers faced was marketing the fish caught by them. Back then, beach auction was the only way of marketing their fish. They were

subjected to lot of exploitation by merchants and middlemen. To counter this, the fish workers established their own marketing system with the help of some social workers. This marketing society is called as 'Marianad Matsya Utpadaka Co-operative Society-'MUCS'. The society is registered under this name. The core activities of MUCS are:

- ◆ marketing of fish caught by members
- ◆ providing credit for renewal of fishing equipment and
- ◆ promoting savings.

The rewarding experiences in the initial years led to the establishment of several MUCS model fish marketing societies in other parts of Trivandrum district. By 1980s, there were 10 primary societies in Trivandrum. These societies were also constituted with SIFFS as their apex body. Then gradually, societies from the neighboring districts also started working under SIFFS. Started as an apex body of societies in Trivandrum district, SIFFS was reorganized in its present form i.e. the apex of a three-tier structure in 1986.

These institutions have been formed with a mission of enhancing and increasing livelihoods in marine fishing. Towards this mission SIFFS is implementing various activities at various levels.

Fish marketing, provision of credit for asset replacement from external sources like banks and also from own sources, promotion of savings, insurance for members under govt. schemes, other welfare activities are being implemented by the primary societies of SIFFS.

The district federations are providing the services of monitoring and support services to primary societies, liaison with regional offices of banks for credit, liaison with funding agencies for development support, marketing support to societies, marketing of fishing inputs and welfare schemes.

The apex organization SIFFS implements the activities of technology development and dissemination, boat building and repair services, import and distribution of outboard motors and repair services, credit program for members, extension of primary societies network, marketing of fish and



fish products, running of ice plants for ice supply, studies, research, documentation and publication, advocacy and lobbying and support to fisher women's groups etc.

SIFFS pioneered the introduction of marine plywood boats in 1982. Since then, it has been playing a major role in the promotion of marine plywood boats in three districts on Southwest coast of South India. The marine plywood boats

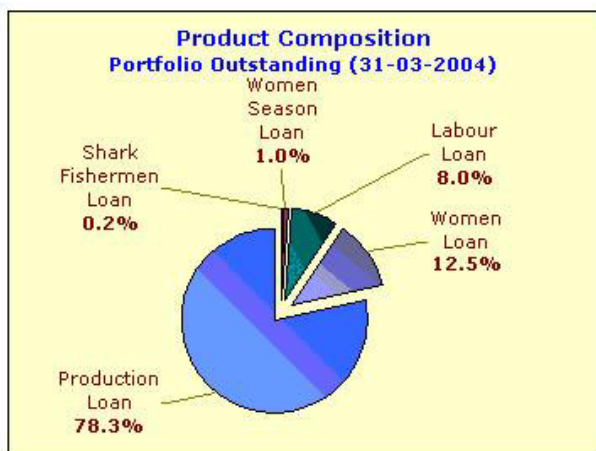


became instant hit among artisanal fishermen who, threatened by the mechanized trawling boats believed that the new boats could help them motorize their operations. SIFFS responded to the increasing demand for plywood boats and forayed into boat building.

Fish marketing has been one of the major areas of intervention of SIFFS. Though control over first point of sale (beach) of fresh fish has been achieved by the village level primary societies, marketing beyond the beach level is entirely in the hands of merchants, agents and private companies. While the private trade is generally efficient, there exist seasons, species and markets where monopolistic practices prevail to the detriment of the fishermen.

SIFFS has been exploring new areas for marketing of both fresh and processed fish through trials and experiments in export market.

New opportunities and threats have emerged as a result of globalization. SIFFS believes that unless the quality of the landed fish is improved through proper handling and preservation on board and on shore, the fishermen are likely to lose out in the international market. Quality improvement program is an area of priority for SIFFS now.



SIFFS has also initiated marketing of fish in the domestic market through a retail shop in Trivandrum. The shop aims to serve as a channel to sell the surplus fish procured for the export purpose.

Credit has been, together with fish marketing and savings, one of the central themes of the SIFFS model of fishermen societies, right from the time of the first such society. Credit is an essential input for small-scale fisheries for a variety of important needs, and is effectively the lubricant that keeps the sector going. Today, the SIFFS Micro-credit Program is one of the fastest growing activities of the organization, and micro-credit accounts for more than 50 % of the loans given to member fishermen. Through the credit programs, the network (SIFFS, district federations and primary societies) covers almost all the requirements of fishermen such as purchase and renewal of fishing equipments, repair and maintenance of fishing equipment, food credit, employment diversification, post harvest activities, other consumption credit, retirement benefits and insurance etc.

The credit program is closely linked with fish marketing and savings. Loan repayment is generally based on a percentage (10-15% depending on the quantum of loan) of fish catches, and not on a fixed installment.

Sustainability of the artisanal fisheries requires changes in fishermen strategies for fishing and Government rules and regulations. It also needs the development of appropriate institutional mechanisms.

SIFFS believes a multi pronged approach including education of fishermen and influencing policy makers and other stakeholders, is needed urgently from the side of NGOs working actively with the fishermen, to tackle the increasingly complex issues emerging in the fisheries sector.

By understanding that lack of sustainability of the fisheries sector would adversely affect the livelihoods of thousands of fishermen and their families, recently SIFFS is making a comprehensive intervention in alternate employment generation. It is offering a high quality technical training in certain fields to the youth from fishing community. It also set up Center for Employment Oriented Training (C-EOT), an autonomous division, in 2003 to diversify and upscale current activities in alternate employment generation.

Tsunami in 2005 caused extensive damage to the livelihoods of fishermen along the coastal areas. SIFFS was the first and only organization which took up the restoration of livelihoods of fishermen very soon by providing them nets, boats, boat repair works etc. SIFFS started engine repair camps in the Tsunami affected areas. Boat repairing camps were also organized and the repairs were done free of cost. SIFFS supplied catamarans to many fishermen. Fishing nets were also distributed by SIFFS. Supply of food, water and clothing to the affected was another important work done by SIFFS.

SIFFS is also working with fisher women groups and trying to develop and strengthen the capacity of women leadership and staff of women's organizations.

The journey of SIFFS is a perfect example of how an organization can transform the lives of people who are dependent on a traditional livelihoods. ☺

# Banks for a Better Future

Prices of essential commodities are on the upward spiral world-wide. Countries producing food grains are starving for the same. Some say its the bio-fuel rush in the West while some in the West think its Indians eating more that caused the crisis. Whatever may be the reasons stated, one undeniable outcome is the enormous burden it placed on the poor everywhere. The food grains shortage followed by price rise has cut into their pockets deeply. In this context exploring local indigenous systems like grain banks that store in times of surplus and distribute in times of need assumes significance. **Subrata Singh** portrays an interesting case of the grain banks in Orissa and the transformations the system is going through.

The villages are key institutions characterized by a variety of social arrangements designed to insure village members against a subsistence crisis. For these villages, collective action is a very practical matter, a way to get things done and provide for the public good. The villages in Orissa provide us a rich diversity of such collective action in the form of building infrastructures like Community Centers, roads, ponds etc for the protection of their forests through the thengapalli system, voluntary patrolling. Grain Bank in its present form is an indigenous system of banking paddy and other cereals. It has been designed to address the risk of floods and droughts and the scarcity of food grains. This indigenous system has evolved due to the highly frequent natural calamities.

Angul and Dhenkanal districts in Orissa are subject to floods and drought. The riparian tracks on both sides of the rivers Brahmani and Mahanadi have faced repeated occurrence of flood causing harm to the standing crops. But droughts are a more serious calamity in the district owing to its undulating topography and high porosity of surface soil. These districts have faced recurrent calamities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

These districts faced acute food shortages due to flood of 1868, famine of 1889, scarcity of 1897, 1908-09, and famine 1918-19. The famine of 1889 is well recorded-

"In the Angul subdivision there had not been a good harvest of winter rice during the previous four years, while that of 1887-88 was on the average not more than 6 annas and that of 1888-89 not more than 8 annas of a normal crop. Considerable distress was reported in the autumn of 1888, and some measures of relief were adopted, the most important of which was the relaxation of forest rules, but a copious fall of rain in September so improved the condition of things that measure of relief were gradually discontinued, except that the forest rules were not re-imposed. In spite of this rain, however, the rice crop was an indifferent one, and a large portion of higher land was left untilled, for there was great drought from October till the following May. The Mohua, mango and palm crops failed both in Angul and adjoining states, and early in the year the agriculturists found themselves unable to keep the field labourers in their service and

Thengapalli is an amalgam of thenga meaning "stick" and palli for "rotational turn." Thengapalli is a traditional system of stick rotation whereby a thenga is placed in front of the house of the person who is responsible for patrolling the forest on a particular day. At the end of the day, he leaves the thenga outside his neighbor's door, who assumes patrolling responsibilities the next day. This popular patrolling practice has received wide accolade at the international level and is viewed as an innovative method for forest protection and social mobilization.

discharged them. The later were thus suddenly thrown out of employment, and were unable to find work elsewhere. In ordinary years they might have subsisted for some time on edible roots, fruits etc. of the jungles, but unfortunately in this year jungle produce also failed or became very scarce. The labourers, therefore, being suddenly deprived of all sources of subsistence could only be supported by special measures until demand again arose for their services."

*(Source: Orissa District Gazetteer, Dhenkanal).*

During these periods too, there have been evidences of the existence of institutions like "**Debatara Bhoomi**" meaning land meant for deity. These lands were cultivated collectively and the grains produced were used principally for festivals, taking care of visitors as well as distribution to the needy.

There were the institutions called **DESKOTHS** (Village Fund) in almost all the villages of Pallahara Subdivision and adjoining areas, from which people took paddy and paid interests varying from 12% to 25% per year. There were also **SARVARAKARS** who lent paddy to the people and realized the entire loans after harvest. The origin of Grain Bank is not very distinct but according to the opinion of the experts and older generation people in villages these institutions were started to cope with the scarcity of food grains resulting due



**Case Study of Ranjaguda** - The tiny village of Ranjaguda is situated in Orissa's backward district of Rayagada. It possesses little land for cultivation and its residents depend on monsoon to grow their single crop every year. They spend the rest of the time foraging in the forests for berries and other forest produce. Or they migrate to near by towns in search of employment. Droughts and starvation deaths were frequent visitors. In this context 40 families facilitated by the NGO, Agramee came together to start a grain bank. Each family contributed 9 kilos of ragi to the bank. Though skeptical initially, the villagers confidence boosted when the collection in the bank reached to six quintals of ragi. A separate shed was constructed for proper storage of the grain. The success of collectivization encouraged villagers to build a weir to tap water from a small stream that flowed beside the village. This gave additional water to irrigate 20 acres of land and 25 families could grow both kharif and rabi crop. They also grow vegetables. Distress migration stopped and agriculture engages the villages for major part of the year. In one year the villagers were able to sell 12.6 quintals of surplus ragi. The villagers of Ranjaguda are now in a position to provide grain and offer financial loans to other villagers.

to frequent occurrences of floods and droughts. These informal institutions were present in most of the villages. The members used to deposit a fixed amount of grains after harvest and later took back the required amount in the lean season paying an interest fixed by the group itself.

These informal village level grain banks happened to catch the attention of the peeping eyes of the government officials. As a result, these were registered at the panchayat level, grouping several villages together. This was probably with the intention of broadening the working of the institution. Slowly the grain banks got converted into cash cum grain society. With the registration of the society, the government and other agencies also became shareholder of the cooperative society. This has been clearly reflected in the third five-year plan in Orissa:



Grain banks help cope with scarcity of food grains. The members deposit fixed amount of grains after harvest and take required amount in the lean season paying an interest fixed by the group.



In Orissa, a special problem has been confronted. 2/3 of the areas (except 5 coastal districts) has been covered by Grain Banks. Of these 1800 banks are cash-cum-grain societies. These societies got RBI participation in share. In Orissa, therefore, steps have been taken to convert these societies into a service pattern by suitably amending the bylaw. In the Action Programme, the banks are recognized for revitalization as recommended by Mehta Committee provided they fulfill the following conditions.

- ♦ Keeping the conformity with the action programme and perform multipurpose activities.
- ♦ Recovery of dues should not be below 60% and possibility of becoming viable within 5 to 8 years.
- ♦ Should not be heavily indebted to cooperatives bank and maintain separate account for cash and grain.

From cash-cum-grain society, these took the shape of credit-cum-service society, mainly due to the non-availability of grain and to channelize the supplies of commodities, which are to come through PDS, as it was believed that they would be better substitute to PDS. Another outfit of these credit-

cum-service societies have taken the form of MINI BANKS, which are to encourage savings, and give short-term credits. Earlier it used to be only agricultural loans, but now loans of other types are also given.

At present, most of the societies have only been confined to Service Societies or act as another government body to advance loans.

The problems as seen are:

- ♦ Now most of these credit-cum-service societies face a problem of non-recovery of loans, resulting in lesser and lesser number of people getting the loans, as less capital is available for circulation.

- ♦ Elections became a formality to meet a few conditions, required by the government. This takes into confidence a few influential people in the village, alienating rest of the members from its functioning.

The objective and direction with which these institutions started, has been lost somewhere in the above process of change. The idea of having a reserve to meet the need of grains and seeds during shortage, have an institution controlled and maintained by the people themselves within the village has been transformed into an attitude of dependency on an institution which is moving further from them in terms of objective, functioning and approachability.

Despite the plethora of intervention systems, we see seeds of the old traditions germinating. Small institutions reappearing, confined to a small group of people, may be at hamlet or a village level, exclusively controlled and maintained by themselves. They are proud of it. For these institutions they do not look for outside help, as outside help has a connotation of interference i.e. negative. Such small-scale grain banks are now being formed in many of the villages with the same old principles but far more determined to serve its purpose. ❄

# Right to Information Act

India passed the historic Right to Information Act in 2005 to uphold the democratic values of transparency and accountability in the Government. Lack of awareness and illiteracy are hampering the usage of the Act to its fullness.

Increasing transparency and accountability in any organization is a huge challenge to the administration. In a big democratic country like India, increasing accountability in governance is a much difficult task. But it is the responsibility of governments to be accountable to the people in order to safeguard the democratic spirit. Towards achieving transparency and accountability in administration, the Indian government has taken a remarkable step by passing the right to information act in the year 2005.

The Right to Information Act (RTI) is enacted by the Parliament of India to give all its citizens access to the records of central and state governments. This bill was passed by the Parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2005 and came into force from 13<sup>th</sup> October 2005. The Act applies to all States and Union Territories of India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Previously information disclosure was restricted in India by the Official Secrets Act 1923 and various other special laws. The RTI Act now relaxed the previous Acts and made information accessible to all.

The RTI Act defines "information" as any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being in force.

Under the provisions of the Act any citizen may request information from a public authority, which is required to reply within 30 days. The Act also directs every public authority to computerize their records for wide dissemination. The public authorities also should maintain their records duly catalogued and indexed.

All complying departments must appoint their Public Information Officer (PIO). Any citizen of India may submit a request to the PIO for information in any format, paper or electronic. It is the PIO's responsibility to ensure that the information is obtained from the appropriate department or section. If the request pertains to another public authority (in whole or part) it is the PIO's responsibility to transfer/forward the concerned portions of the request to a PIO of the other within 5 days. In addition, every public authority is required to designate Assistant Public Information Officers (APIOs) to receive RTI requests and appeals for forwarding to the PIOs of their public authority.

A person, who desires to obtain any information under this act, shall make request in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area in which the application is being made, accompanying such fee as may be prescribed. The citizen making the request is not obliged to explain why the information is needed.

The Act specifies time limits for replying to the request. If the request has been made to the PIO, compliance is expected within 30 days of receipt. If the request has been made to an APIO, compliance is expected within 35 days of receipt. If the PIO transfers the request to some other public authority the time allowed to reply is 30 days but computed from the day after it is received by the PIO of the transferee authority. Information about Human Rights violations by Security agencies is to be provided within 45 days but with the prior approval of the Central Information Commission. However, in any of the above cases, if life or liberty is involved, the PIO has to reply within 48 hours.


If information is not provided within this period, it is treated as a refusal. Refusal with or without reasons may be ground for appeal.

Under the Act right to information includes the right to - inspect works, documents, records and take notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records and also take certified samples of material. The applicant can obtain information in form of printouts, diskettes, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts.

However, there are certain exemptions to the Act. Certain information which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India; which has been expressly forbidden to be published by any court of law or tribunal; the disclosure of which cause a breach of privilege of Parliament or the state legislature; information including commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party etc were exempted from disclosure.

Central intelligence and security agencies like IB, RAW, BSF, CRPF, Central economic intelligence bureau and Directorate of enforcement etc were also excluded from the Act. But the exclusion is not absolute. These organizations have an obligation to provide information pertaining to allegations of corruption and human rights violations.

The RTI Act clearly specified the Government's role in the implementation of the Act. Governments have the responsibility to develop educational programs for the public especially disadvantaged communities on RTI, encourage public authorities participate in the development and organization of such programs, promote timely dissemination of accurate information to the public, train officers and develop training material, compile and disseminate a user guide for the public in the respective official language etc.

Many feel that RTI can be a powerful weapon in the hands of common people which can be used to check corruption and also to increase transparency. Still lot of awareness need to be brought about RTI Act among common public to realize the real fruits of the Act. 

# Leadership of Non-Profits

The leadership and management of non-profits have not received adequate attention in the research. We need specific research focussing on the non-profits.

Non-profit organizations come to serve a purpose. Their mission is the most important value to the founders/social entrepreneurs. Often, the direction is to bring changes towards a just society, as perceived and articulated by the founders.

Ideally, all the persons engaged in the non-profit organization should have voluntarily come forward and be a part of the organization, having subscribed to - motivated by - the purpose of the organization. However, in reality there are three kinds of people that work for the non-profits:

- ♦ Professionals, who are increasingly joining non-profits, and whose focus is on the career opportunities offered by the non-profits.
- ♦ Personnel at the lower level who have joined the non-profit for a job, and whose focus is only to keep the job.
- ♦ Volunteers across all the levels of organizational hierarchy, who have been motivated by the purpose for which the non-profit is working.

The professionals would want responsibility, growth, interaction with outside world/exposure, and some extent of formalization of systems and clarity in the processes. The uncertainty associated with volunteerism may not attract them. They look for clearly visible achievement.

Unlike the professionals, volunteers would be happy with the idea that they had done their best to serve the purpose. They would detest even the slightest controls imposed by systems; and might even consider systems as oppositions in their quest to do something towards the purpose.

On the other hand, the job workers simply follow the instructions and would be more happy with bureaucratic systems. But, in the name of primacy of processes, they are averse to clear plans and targets. Despite being job seekers, their conduct will have to further the purpose. In that way, they will bring in their emotions also into their work.

Therefore, the leaders of the non-profits have to judiciously balance these three players at the same time. The issue could become more complicated if some of the job workers are motivated/ sensitized enough with the purpose, and are giving their best, even though they consider it only a job.

The complexity becomes much greater as there is a broad expectation that the non-profits would be better democratic organizations. Indeed, part of what people may want to accomplish in non-profit organizations may have as much to do with constructing an authentically democratic form of organization in which ordinary people get to practice democracy and voice as it does with the desire to achieve specific goals. As such, the processes of the organization may prove to be as important to the participants as the goals, and this may be an equally important way in which

non-profit organizations distinguish themselves from for-profit or state agencies.

With the community beginning to consider the work of the non-profit as their entitlement, several latent elements in the community are organizing offensives against the non-profit and its functioning. The non-profits become the focal points of those who want to ascend the ladders of local political power, as the work of established non-profit in the locality has a greater influence on the people. And the employees of the non-profit (professionals, volunteers and job seekers) will have to present the same message to outside world when such onslaughts occur. A large section of the rank and file, most of whom may have come from the community itself and may have joined the organization only to get a job (and hence have nothing to do with the purpose), could join the opposition power groups in a sly manner. Hence, the discontentment among the staff may have to be managed, albeit paltry resources that exist.

Despite all these considerations, the leader cannot present different faces of leadership with different constituents. Else, he would be accused of partisan attitudes. The leader cannot afford to lose any of the three groups.

Despite such complexity in choosing the leadership pattern, inspiring the team and motivating the employees, literature survey indicates the lack of a systematic study of the leadership and human resource management issues in non-profits.

As a result, too often, the practitioners and students of non-profits get sidetracked by a lens borrowed from the for-profit (dominant) sector. In this way, non-profit practitioners may come to think that they need to emulate the formal and hierarchical organizational structures that can only eliminate substantive values from the effective equation. Concerns with efficiency can come to crowd out devotion to substantive purpose, bringing in place of those qualitative purposes "accountability" data that can be used to justify and protect the organization but add little to its actual services and formal rules and procedures that only discourage formerly devoted volunteers and staff from participating.

Hence, there is a need to undertake and support such research in non-profits. For a better understanding, the grassroots level organizations need to open their door and minds to the researchers, shedding their inhibitions and without an attempt to shroud the discontentment in their employees, if any. Where required, the research community may have to design and accept alternative research methodologies to take up such studies. Accumulation of knowledge based on experience may have to be promoted in formal peer reviewed journals to generate the required hypotheses for research. ☛

## Centring & Rod Bending going Strong!

House and the way it is constructed serve as an important yardstick to comprehend one's life style, culture and quality of life. The early man used trees, caves, hills as dwelling places. People were on the move for hunting and food gathering and greener pastures therefore their nomadic lifestyle did not demand permanent settlements. As time progressed and science and technology improved and settled lifestyle was adopted people took to more and more permanent structures to dwell. Today we see houses ranging all the way from huts to multi-storey buildings. We see infrastructure like bridges, , dams, complex drainage systems taking shape rapidly everywhere. In early days much of the construction was done without use of steel, cement etc. However the scenario is quite different today - even constructing a small shack requires steel, cement and other inputs.

With the economy booming, construction in India is surely on the upswing. The phenomenon is more vivid in the cities. In addition to this, initiatives of the governments like constructing houses for the poor in rural areas is happening on a large scale. Under NREGA construction works are taking place. All this

means the demand for livelihoods like masonry, centring and rod bending and other construction associated activities is thriving.

In the current situation the number of people skilled in centring and rod bending are less than the prevailing demand. The gap is at least 30 per cent. The market, especially construction companies and contractors are desperately running short of personnel with centring and rod bending skills. This creates a decent opportunity for the youth to occupy this space. Even at the international level the demand for Indian workers is high and many of them are migrating abroad especially to Middle East to undertake these works.

On an average, centring and rod bending fetches about Rs.250 to 400 per day. Those working as contractors in this field make even Rs.1000 per day. With lot of construction works taking place the number of days of employment is also high.

To provide improvised skills and skills based on the market demand, the National Academy of Construction (NAC) is conducting training in centring and rod bending techniques.

Centring and Rod Bending look Promising! ❖

## Bamboo Craftsmen in Doldrums!

Crafts made of bamboo like baskets, chairs, fans, toys, pots, mats and decorated pandals are definite arts of beauty and difficult to ignore and its but natural that you feel like buying one.

These crafts are made by bamboo craftsmen (like Maydara). These craftsmen use bamboo as the key raw material to make their products. The raw material is either collected from the forest directly, purchased in the auction or purchased from the private people.

These bamboo poles are soaked in water for couple of days and gradually make them into products. While purchase of the poles and making into pieces are mostly done by men the weaving is done by women. Lot of children also engage in this work and therefore they remain school drop outs. Many a time they are not reckoned as child labour.

The new trends, changing tastes, evolving technologies are steadily introducing products which last longer and competing with bamboo products. People are using more plastic ware in spite of the fact that they are not environment friendly but because they are cheaper and last longer. Therefore although the bamboo products are eco-friendly and artistic they usage has dropped dramatically.

On the other hand, the governments have stopped supply of bamboo poles to bamboo craftsmen cooperatives, thanks to liberalization, privatization and globalization, making availability of the raw material to the craftsmen legally difficult. We hear black movement of the bamboo poles and craftsmen end up paying hafta to secure raw materials. All this makes bamboo product costly.

The livelihood of small fruit and vegetable vendors who have been using bamboo baskets is, as discussed earlier, showing a declining trend. Thanks to all the chain stores selling fresh vegetables and fruits. This decline in turn is contributing to the decline of the livelihoods of the bamboo workers.

One way forward can be to create a niche market for some of the bamboo workers so they service the growing middle class and upper middle class market. For most others the way forward can be seeking their due share in the emerging sectors. Alternative livelihoods need to be crafted that can leverage their existing craftsmanship.

Governments, civil society, solidarity groups of the craftsmen themselves have to proactively pursue this alternative path. Only then the bamboo workers will see the light at the end of the tunnel!

Dr. E. Venkatesh ❖

## Fr. Thomas Kocheri - the Crusader of the Coasts

A Lawyer, a Priest, a Trade Union Leader and an Environmentalist, Fr. Thomas Kocheri is the man who is striving to protect the people who live closer to the earth from those who have detached themselves from the earth. The stories of despair and destitution of fishermen changed him forever and made him to work for the welfare of fisher folk. He brought together the fishermen in the country, leveraging their demands for better treatment from the powers and is aptly called by many as the Crusader of the Coasts.

Fr. Thomas Kocheri was born in Changanassery, Kerala in 1940 as fifth son in a family of 11 children including seven boys and four girls. His father used to work as a journalist in a catholic news paper. He did all his schooling in Changanassery and received law degree from Kerala University. While he was in college he met a Redemptorist Priest Fr John Anthony, who had gone to Changanassery to study Malayalam, the principal language of Kerala State. Inspired by Anthony, Thomas Kocheri wanted to join the Redemptorists. Soon after his priestly ordination in 1971, Fr. Kocheri plunged himself into social activities.

Thomas Kocheri started to work among the Bangladeshi refugees in Raigunj in West Bengal. After this he went to Thiruvananthapuram to work among people from fishing communities. He began to work in a small fishing village called Poothura near Thiruvananthapuram. There he came across some middlemen exploiting the fisher folks. This exploitation was keeping the later permanently on the edge of starvation. He decided to arm the fisher men with knowledge by teaching them to read and write. He found the fishermen hard working, poor and with illiteracy levels ranging from 70 to 75 per cent. He began to take classes for children and at the same time, interacting with the fisher folk.

With the formation of the Anchuthengu Boat Workers' Union during the Emergency days in response to the corruption in one scheme aimed at providing trawlers to the boat workers he entered into the trade union scene in the country. Fr Thomas was elected as the president of the union and the new union declared an indefinite fast in front of the government secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram demanding an enquiry on the corruption in the scheme. Consequently, the fisheries minister ordered an enquiry and the project officer responsible was dismissed.

This experience among the fishing community led Fr Thomas to organize the Trivandrum Independent Fish workers Union. This union later became a state level federation called the Kerala Independent fish workers federation. He also chaired the National Fish Workers Forum from 1982-96.

In 1989, he organized India's biggest coastal environment protest, the Kanyakumari March, in collaboration with many other NGOs. The march mobilized thousands of people including women to fight against destructive fishing gears and water pollution. About 25,000 people took part in that march against Koodamkulam nuclear plant and it ended in police firing.



In 1991, in pursuit of globalization the GOI announced its Joint Venture Policy which invited foreign companies to enter into Indian waters. This had a danger of exhausting our dwindling fish stocks. In response to this policy Fr Thomas brought together all the stakeholders in fisheries to form the National Fisheries Action Committee against Joint Ventures. He went on hunger strikes for this cause twice. As a result of these actions the fisher folk found representation in Murari High Powered Committee that was instructed to look into and redraft the deep sea fishing policy. This led to a ban on new licenses and the cancellation of all foreign fishing.

Fr Thomas actively opposes the commercialization of prawn culture. The scale when taken up on commercial levels will destroy the paddy fields supporting thousands of hard working farming communities. His rationale is simple: *Protect the Coast and it will Protect Us*. The fishing grounds and coastal zones around the world are in crisis now and hence he advocates that the fishermen must unite to protect their natural capital and human rights.

Fr. Thomas received many awards for his outstanding contributions to environment in general and towards improving the quality of life of the fishing communities in particular. The awards include, Earth Trustee Award by the Earth Society Foundation, New York, Sophie Prize from Norway and a gold medal from FIAN International for Socio-Economic Human Rights Protection, Germany.

Fr. Thomas wants the government to acknowledge that the sea is a source of all life and take measures to protect coastal waters and coastal communities. He wants an end to the industrial pollution. In his own words, *'The Life of the Planet and the Dependent Health and Welfare of Humanity must not be Sacrificed to the Greed of the Few'*. ☘

# Books

## Book Summary

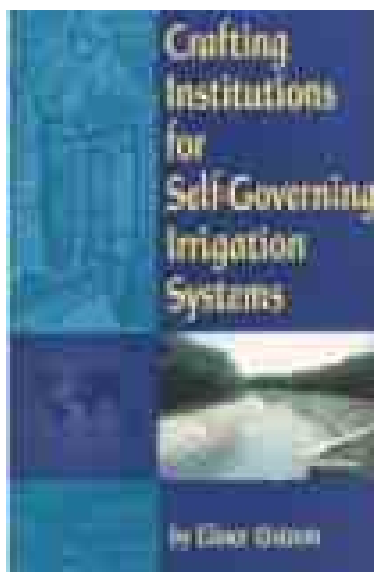
Name: **Crafting Institutions for Self-governing Irrigation Systems**

Author: **Elinor Ostrom**

Year of publication: **1992**

Publisher: **Institute for Contemporary Studies, San Francisco, California**

In an earlier book '**Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action**', Ostrom came up with 8 design principles for governing and properly using the common property resources. The application of these principles to crafting such collective action is given in this book, with specific reference to irrigation systems.



Traditionally, irrigation systems were designed as engineering marvels, without taking into account the social reality or involving the users of such systems in the design or operations and maintenance of the irrigation systems. As a result, the systems were not properly maintained.

Therefore, there is a need to integrate the users with the O&M of the irrigation systems. However, this integration cannot be imposed from outside with pre-set rules. These rules should evolve during a process of interaction between the users and water suppliers. The word 'crafting' is used to denote/describe the ongoing process that must

directly involve the users and suppliers of a benefit/resource, throughout the design process.

Eight principles need to be kept in mind while designing any self-governing system.

- ♦ Clearly defined boundaries: Both the boundaries of the service area and the individuals or households with rights to use water from an irrigation system are clearly defined.
- ♦ Congruence or proportional equivalence between benefits and costs: Rules specifying the amount of water that a user is allocated are related to local conditions and to rules requiring labour, materials, and/or money inputs.
- ♦ Collective-choice arrangements i.e., the arrangements should not be imposed by outsiders but should be chosen by all (or most) of the persons affected or using the water.
- ♦ Monitoring i.e., the monitors should actively audit physical conditions and users behaviour, and be accountable to the users. It is best if the monitors are also the users.
- ♦ Graduated sanctions: Users who violate operational rules should receive graduated sanctions.
- ♦ Conflict resolution mechanisms: Users and their officials have rapid access to low-cost local arenas to resolve conflict between users or between users and officials.
- ♦ Minimal recognition of rights to organize: The rights of the users to devise their own institutions (and change the rules to suite the changed conditions) are not challenged by external governmental authorities.
- ♦ Nested enterprises: Provision, use, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution, and governance activities are organized in multiple layers of nested enterprises, each layer being largely independent and supportive of others.

In a later book, she also suggests the attributes of the resource and the users that are conducive to an increased likelihood that self-governing associations will form. ♣

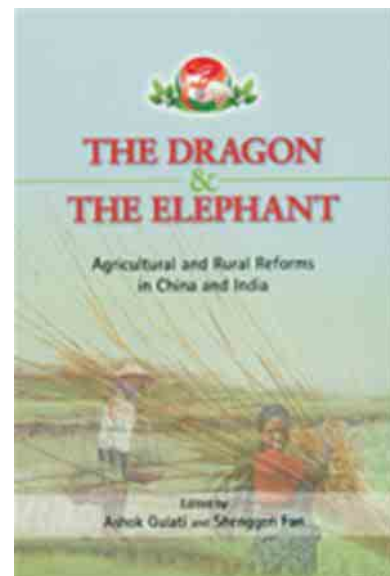
## New Books

Name: **The Dragon & The Elephant**

**Agricultural and Rural Reforms in China and India**

Author: **Ashok Gulati and Shenggen Fan**

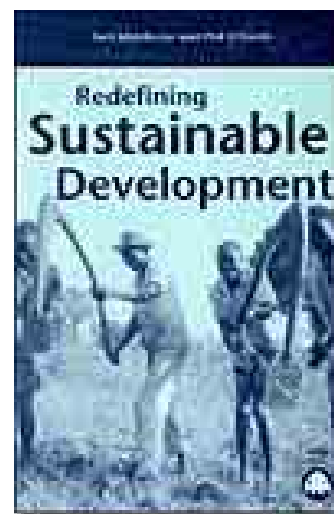
Publisher: **Oxford University Press**



Name: **Redefining Sustainable Development**

Author: **Neil Middleton and Phil O'Keefe**

Publisher: **Pluto Press**



## Fisheries and Aqua Culture

### Magazines

**Fishing Chimes** is a monthly fisheries journal published from Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. It was established in 1981 by J.V.H. Dixitulu. The core idea behind the publication of Fishing Chimes is to bring the latest in the technological developments in capture and culture fisheries and in processing aqua products including value addition. For more information one can visit [www.fishingchimes.com](http://www.fishingchimes.com).

### Books

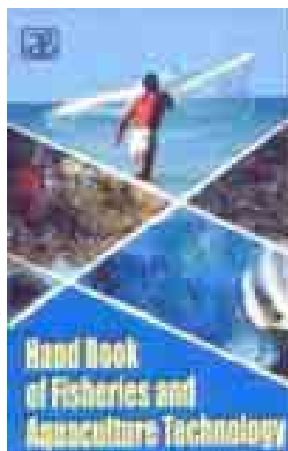
#### Handbook of Fisheries and Aqua Culture Technology

**Author:** NIIR Board of Consultants and Engineers

**Publisher:** Asia Pacific Business Press Inc

**Price:** Rs.1100/-

A wide range of aspects of fresh water aquaculture such as selection of species of fish and shell fish, construction and preparation of various types of fish ponds, control of aquatic weeds and predators, production of seed fish and their transportation, fish nutrition and fish diseases and their control pertaining to composite fish culture, air breathing fish culture etc are dealt at length in this book.



The Training Calendar for 2008-2009 is as follows:

Sl. No.	Course Title	Date	No. of Days	Strength	Fee (Rs)
1	Extension Methodologies, Economics and Information Technology for Aquaculture Management	13-17 May 08	5	10	2500
2	Crab Breeding and Culture	16-21 June 08	6	10	4300
3	Competency update on new policies and regulations for sustainable coastal aquaculture development for fishery professionals	23-28 June 08	6	15	1500
4	Shrimp and Fish Nutrition and Feed Management	15-24 July 08	10	10	3000
5	Artemia Culture	7-11 July 08	6	10	2750
6	Seabass Breeding and Culture	20-29 Aug 08	10	10	3500
7	Shrimp Breeding and Hatchery Technology	16-30 Sept 08	15	10	5100
8	Disaster Management in Coastal Aquaculture	14 - 18 Oct 08	5	10	2500
9	Soil and Water Quality Management in Brackishwater Aquaculture	19-28 Nov 08	10	10	4000
10	Aquatic Animal Health Management	16-20 Dec 08	5	10	7500
11	Applications of Genetics and Biotechnology in Aquaculture	19-23 Jan 09	5	10	6500
12	Entrepreneurship Development in Coastal Aquaculture	23 - 28 Feb 09	6	15	1000

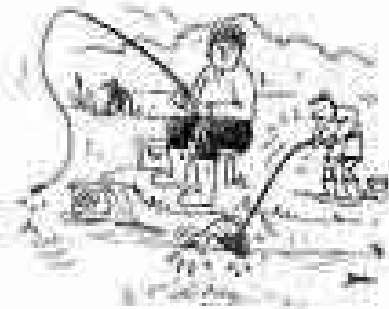
### Trainings

The Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture, Chennai was established in 1987 under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research with a mandate to conduct research for development of techno-economically viable and sustainable culture system for finfish and shellfish in brackish water, to act as repository of information on brackish water fishery resources with a systematic database, to undertake transfer of technology through training, education and extension education programs and to provide consultancy services.

Training courses in brackish water aquaculture are conducted annually by the Institute to the State and Central Government officials, faculty members and students of Fisheries Colleges and Agricultural Universities and to farmers and entrepreneurs engaged in shellfish and finfish aquaculture activities. For more information one can visit [www.ciba.tn.nic.in](http://www.ciba.tn.nic.in).

# Development Fable

The experts arrived at the fishing village. For years, the natives had used primitive techniques in their work. True, they caught fish, but they had to paddle out to sea every day, may be even on feast days. It was a hard life, though well-tried over the years.



The experts gave the fisher-folk improvised nets. The new nets were rather dearer than the old, and the method of fishing was different too. But in a single net they caught a whole week's supply.

Fantastic! You could work one day and be free for the rest of the week! The village folk had a great feast, several feasts... in fact so many that they had to fish two days each week to pay for the celebrations.



"This is no good," thought the experts, "they should be fishing six days a week and making money out of it. We haven't come here to witness endless parties. Surely, it's enough with one feast a month. This is an underdeveloped country; they must produce more proteins – fish!"

But the village favoured fiesta. Fishing two-days, and free the rest of the week.

The experts grew annoyed. They hadn't travelled from the distant North to watch natives drum, dance and dream. They had come to fill hungry stomachs, to lessen the threat of the undernourished against the overfed.

Yet the villagers danced late into the night. Why shouldn't they? They were rich now, almost as rich as the Maharaja, though he had never done a day's work in his life...



And then the Project Director had a brilliant idea. (Not for nothing had he taken an evening course back home in economics.) These lazy fisher-folk were not actually lazy: they were simply weak on motivation, motivation to work harder. They had not discovered their needs.

He bribed a villager to buy a motorbike. Bribery was distasteful, but sometimes necessary. True, there were no roads as such, but the wet sand along the water edge was hard and smooth...



The motorcycle roared back and forth. What a toy! And soon every young man wanted one of his own.

The village elders warned them: "What use is there in riding far off and back again on the sand?" But the young man replied: "We can race. We shall see who is the fastest. And you grey-beards, you can place bets on us!"

The Project Director's idea proved a brilliant success. At last the men fished almost every day. The capital city got the fresh fish it needed. Indeed, a large part is now converted into fish-meal and exported to Europe where it makes excellent pig food and helps keep down the price of bacon.

But probably most pleased of all was the Maharaja, for it so happens that he was sole agent for the motorcycle firm in that country. He also owned the main fish market in the city. While his uncle's family built and ran the fish-meal factory. When the experts flew home, he raised the price of motorcycles, so that to buy one, a man must work three years, instead of a single season.

And the fishermen fished on. They had discovered a need.

## So what is development?

### Is everything new development?

- ♦ Is modernization development? *Modernization will usually mean such changes as seem more efficient and more productive.*
- ♦ Is Economic growth development? *More fish; motorcycles... increased purchasing power...*
- ♦ Is social change development? *(The younger men become more dominant.)* ★



## Poverty Ratios Anchored to the Nutritional Norms

Task Force (1979) defined the poverty line (PL) as the average expenditure of the expenditure group, which can afford per capita per diem intake of 2400 Kcal in rural areas and 2100 Kcal in urban areas. This definition has not been officially modified till date. Planning Commission has been updating the rural and urban PL based on consumer price indices of agricultural labour households and industrial workers' households respectively. As the basket of goods taken into consideration for calculating consumer price index also includes goods that do not contribute to calories and as the prices of industrial goods have increased more than that of the food articles, the revised poverty lines corresponded to progressively reduced calorie intakes over the years. The rural poverty line of 1983 corresponded to 2200 Kcal, that of 1993-94 to 1968 Kcal, 1999-2000 to 1868 Kcal and 2004-05 to 1800 Kcal.

To take care of demographic variations across the States and monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MCPE) classes, 'consumer unit' is used to compare nutrition availability and not per capita calorie intake. A consumer unit is equivalent to a 'standard male aged 20-39 years and doing sedentary work. The nutritional requirements of a consumer unit in India condition are fixed as 2700 Kcal per day. Table below shows the calorie intake per consumer unit at the prevailing poverty lines in various states during 2004-05. It shows the proportion of population that will have to be considered as poor, if the MCPE class nearest to the CU norm was taken as the cut-off. As can be seen, Bihar, UP, and Rajasthan (part of BIMARU states) are not all at the top of the list (i.e., do not have high poverty ratios.) On the contrary, industrially advanced states like Tamil Nadu and Gujarat have obnoxious poverty ratios!

No	State	Official Poverty Lines	Poverty ratio	Calorie intake Per CU at Official PL	PL corresponding to CU calories intake	Corresponding Poverty Ratio
1	Andhra Pradesh	292.95	11.2	2010	690	76.8
2	Assam	387.64	22.3	2207	580	64.3
3	Bihar	354.36	42.1	2365	432.37	59
4	Chattisgarh	322.41	40.8	2284	478.6	78
5	Gujarat	353.93	19.1	2020	890	86.9
6	Haryana	414.76	13.6	2197	690	53.3
7	Himachal Pradesh	394.28	10.7	2324	580	40.9
8	Jharkhand	366.56	46.3	25203	510	77.8
9	Karnataka	324.17	20.8	2038	690	87.4
10	Kerala	430.12	13.2	1917	1005.98	69.3
11	Madhya Pradesh	327.78	36.9	2273	510	75.1
12	Maharashtra	362.25	29.6	2010	580	68.5
13	Orissa	325.79	46.8	2537	429.06	70.5
14	Punjab	410.38	9.1	2172	690	49.2
15	Rajasthan	374.57	18.7	2354	580	64.2
16	Tamil Nadu	351.86	22.8	1913	890	89.2
17	Uttar Pradesh	365.84	33.4	2505	482.2	59.1
18	Uttaranchal	478.02	40.8	2580	580	72.8
19	West Bengal	382.82	28.6	2328	580	68.4
	All India	356.3	28.3	2339	580	70

## Out of Poverty

## Alternative Livelihood

Shanti Mondol, 30, and her husband decided to run away when Nandigram was being evicted. They had to take refuge in a village 50 km away and were left with no sources of livelihood or income to fall back on. They were having no other skill set other than that necessary for farming.

"We were farmers and never learnt to do anything else in life because I did not realise I would ever need it," Mondol says.

"I took refuge in a village called Kajla, which falls in the Contai Deshapran block under Contai sub-division in East Medinipur district of West Bengal. After a few days of wandering, my husband and myself saw light," says Mondol. Kajla is a village in East Medinipur district of West Bengal and lies about 160 km from Kolkata. About 15 per cent of the people who live here are landless. The men from the village migrate seasonally for work in other areas, leaving their families without support for long periods.

The Mondols were taken in by the 'Kajla Janakalyan Samiti', formed seven years ago in Contai Deshapran block in east Medinipur district, an NGO supported by various other

organisations and individuals, which works with displaced and trafficked families and trains them in ways to earn alternate livelihood. The Samiti, which works with close to 8,500 members, trains families in alternate livelihood like making handicraft items, especially from coconut and bamboo like wall-decorations, book shelf, lanterns, etc. The NGO also trains people in making herbal medicines. The Samiti have trained 600 group leaders who in turn have trained other members for better and alternative sources of livelihoods.

According to Mondol: "From being farmers, my husband and myself have become fisher folks as we are fishing and selling them in the market. The Samiti also trained us on preparing various food items from fish. I got a loan of Rs 3,000 from my self-help-group when I wanted to start making food items from fish. I had to pay an interest of Rs 10 per month, which I managed to repay in a year," Mondol says.

Today, Mondol and her husband earn Rs 10,000 per month.



## Broken Lives

## Risk Pushes Rukkamma into Poverty

Somaiah and Rukkamma's family belong to Pedamupparam village of Narasampet mandal of Warangal district, Andhra Pradesh. The major livelihood of this family is toddy (palm sap) tapping. This couple has four children, 3 sons and one daughter. All their sons got married. Their elder son is living separately and the younger one is doing a small job in Surat and staying there. Only their second son is living with them along with his wife. Their daughter is pursuing her graduation.

Somaiah's second son does toddy tapping through out the year. But Somaiah does only in some seasons i.e. for 5 months where demand for toddy is high. He works as agricultural labourer in the remaining months. Rukkamma cannot work because of her ill health. Hence their family has to survive on the meager incomes earned by Somaiah and their son. Both of them together can earn up to Rs 45,000/- a year. With that little money they get their daughter educated and also meet their day to day needs.

While their family is struggling to survive, suddenly their daughter-in-law got brain fever. They had to spend lot of money towards medical help. They took her to many hospitals. They even visited corporate hospitals. They spent almost Rs 1,00,000/- towards hospital fees. They borrowed this money from a local money lender at a very high interest

rate. However in spite of all their efforts they could not save the daughter-in-law. She succumbed to brain fever shortly.

Their family is now in distress. What they earn is barely enough to meet their needs. As of now they are not even able to pay interest on their loans they have taken. The interest is mounting, the debt burden is increasing.

Now the family is contemplating of selling the only asset they own - half acre land to repay some debts. This means they will have to give up their asset and become landless. They will not have anything else left to cater to future shocks. The livelihood they practice - toddy tapping - is of high risk. A fall from the tree can prove fatal.

The life of Somaiah and Rukkamma shows us that all the incomes of the poor families are just sufficient for their day to day survival. The capacities of the poor to meet any kind of risk or unforeseen expenditure is minimal or absent. Even those who could successfully climb out of poverty go back into it during times of risk.

Mechanisms to reduce risk where possible can be made by all the interested stakeholders. Insurance packages to suit the needs of the poor, pro-poor savings schemes, procuring assets by the poor where possible can help the poor from falling back into dire situations when they are confronted with risks. ❁

Ugadi, Rama Navami and peaking up summer, remembering Dr BR Ambedkar has marked the month that went by. Cyclone in Myanmar has taken more than 60000 lives.

Gandhian, trustee of Gandhian Social Work in India, Nirmala Deshpande is no more with us. Probably there are no surviving direct followers of Gandhi now. May her soul rest in peace.

We began to experience the hot summer. Our travels and summer seem to be competing with each other. Livelihoods Orientations and Planning occupied our time during the month. We began to think about enhancing livelihoods of the urban poor. Distance Livelihoods Education has also been thought about. Continued time has been invested in Reviews and Brainstorming of Livelihoods Support Organizations and Projects, along with developing the management information system and digging deep within us.

We heard 2 million people participated in the inauguration of the Oneness temple in Chittoor. Some 10 people died in the stampede. Lots and lots of frustrated and/or restless people are flocking to ‘religion’ and ‘spiritual’ masters. The time has come to find ways and means to attract more and more people to the cause of enhancing livelihoods of the poor from all walks of life.

As I surf the TV channels, more and more channels have come up to provide ‘spiritual’ content. Then we have sports channels. We have music channels. Of course, we have a plenty of news channels. We may have to think of exclusive channels for development/livelihoods. We need to increase the coverage for development/livelihoods aspects with true livelihoods perspective.

As I see the growing micro-finance movement and SHG movement, it stirred me deep within. We see, in village after village, at least in South India, there are competing MFIs and credit providers/mechanisms to provide the credit to the poor. Of course, the terms are not uniform. People are availing the credit from formal multiple sources, apart from the informal sources. The issue is no longer the credit really speaking. The issue is the ideas for investing the amounts that can enhance the incomes and livelihoods for the poor. The platforms and forums created by the MF and SHG movement offer viable structures for taking up these ideas. Unfortunately, many of the structures largely remained unused for larger livelihoods agenda.

Our field visits in Warangal (AP) and Karnataka, have indicated many gaps and opportunities that can be tapped – collective sourcing of raw materials, local value-addition and

marketing where clusters of producers are present; collective sourcing of materials for reducing expenditures and meeting needs of the large number of poor like food etc.; encouraging entrepreneurs to service the needs of the poor and others; etc. The need to orient and offer livelihoods lenses to the staff in MF can be an important step in actualizing some of these possibilities.

**More at the personal level, I am able to appreciate the need to set the direction, rather than focusing on nitty-gritty, and the need to move towards practicing universal values as completely as possible.**

**When Ramakrishna responded to a request of the mother of a boy to tell her son not to eat jaggery, he needed a week’s time to stop his habit of eating jaggery before telling the boy. As livelihoods workers and mentors we go through this again and again. The need is to be role models ourselves. Can we practice being true role models? Should we become ‘professionals’ where we just work for the objectives set whether we believe in them or not, as effectively and efficiently as possible?**

## G Muralidhar

**Krishna waited a long time for his successor to spread the Karma Yoga and finally found Arjuna. When the chosen one is in doubt or dilemma, he went on to remind him of all the discussions on the subject they had, in the form of Bhagavadgita. It is important to realize the importance of the person who argues, Krishna confirms. If Arjuna has not asked those questions, Krishna would not have responded with the responses.**

**The world is controlled by the yoga – union – law of attraction and love. As we think, we transmit our thoughts to the world and the world responds by conspiring to make them real. If we have conflicting thoughts, the world gets confused. Thus, the desire, vision, the intention and the intensity of this intention makes our vision a reality.**

**If we seek Santhi and Joy – let us intensely desire for it. It will happen.**

To practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed, with physical, mental and energy bodies, to the purpose with love and purity, without attachment to fruits of work.

Come with us into the world of yoga – ***the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom - for making definite strides towards achieving awareness about us and our extended selves . ☺***

