



## A BRIEF REVIEW OF FISHERIES SECTOR AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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### **Abstract**

*Fisheries play a greater role in the economic development of India. As India got coastal lines on all the three borders, the people who depend on fisheries are huge and their lives are determined by the fishery resources. The major problem of fishermen is that non-availability of funds, loss due to storm and other natural calamities, borders in the coastal area, involvement of brokers in the marketing of fishery products etc. Beyond these problems, fishery sector of India has grown immensely due to the major role played by government. Thus, this paper has made an attempt to review the role of government in the fisheries development of India.*

**Keywords:** *Fisheries Sector, Livelihood, Food Security.*

### **Introduction**

Fishery is the oldest and most important livelihood option for the inhabitants of the coastal line of the country since times immemorial. This natural resource along with the marine environment has been the custodian of livelihood security of the coastal populace. The web of life of the coastal community is woven around it, be it festivals, weddings or even death, the community is intricately related to the natural marine resource.

Approximate of about 1 % of the total population depends upon fishery sector in India as a primary source of livelihood – direct employment to about 6 million fishers and to another six million people who are employed in fishery related activities. India has an estimated marine resources potential of about 3.9 million tons per year. This potential source can be bracketed under two categories i.e. oceanic fishery and coastal fishery. The important marine fish disposition in India are the Mackerel, Sardines, Bombay duck, Shark, Ray, Perch, Croaker, Carangid, Sole, Ribbonfish, Whitebait, Tuna, Silver belly, Prawn, Shrimp, Squid, Octopus, Red snapper, Lobster, Cat fish and Cuttlefish. Among the species caught, Indian oil sardine, Indian mackerel and Sciaenidae are dominant ones.

With a total fishermen population of about 14.5 million (Livestock census, 2003) and rich marine and inland water resources, fisheries and aquaculture forms an important sector with regard to employment, livelihood and food security. Fish products also form a significant commodity for overseas trade. During the past decades the Indian fisheries and aquaculture has witnessed improvements in craft, tackle and farming methods. Creation of required harvest and post-harvest infrastructure has been receiving due attention of the central and state governments. All this has been inducing a steady growth<sup>1</sup>.

There are several specialized institutes that train fishermen. The Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical and Engineering Training in Juhu instruct operators of deep-sea fishing vessels and technicians for shore establishments. It has facilities in Madras and Vishakhapatnam for about 500 trainees a year. An Institute named "Fisheries Institute of Technology and Training" (FITT) was established with the participation of TATAs in Tamil Nadu, to improve the socioeconomic condition of fishers. The Integrated Fisheries Project, also headquartered in Kochi, was established for the processing, popularizing, and marketing of unusual fish. Another training organization, the Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries in Bangalore, has done techno-economic feasibility studies on locations of fishing harbor sites and brackish-water fish farms. At present there are 19 Fisheries colleges and one fisheries university (CIFE: Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai) functioning in various states of the country, providing Professional Fisheries education with a view of developing Professionalism in the field of Fisheries. Among the fisheries colleges, Fisheries College and Research Institute located in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu is the more popular college because of the maximum number of intake of MFSc and PhD candidates every year. Other colleges such as the College of Fisheries, Panangad, College of Fisheries, Mangalore are also working well for the professionalism.

Fishery Survey of India was established on 26th August 1946, as a Deep sea Fishing Station in post-war era to augment the fish production in the country. According to the Vice-Chancellor of Fisheries University of Tamilnadu, Prof. Baskaran Manimaran, Fisheries sector plays an important role in Indian economy and contributes substantially (5.4%) to the agricultural GDP of our country. India stands second in the total fish production with annual production of 8.46 million tonnes. Tamil Nadu contributes about 7.32% to total Indian fish production. Fisheries sector plays an important role in the



livelihood of people across the nation including Tamil Nadu, which has a population of 11.38 lakh fisherfolk. The marine fishing fleets comprising of 6,728 mechanized fishing boats and 56,792 traditional fishing crafts exploit the total coastal length of 1,076 km in Tamil Nadu. Inland fisheries is an emerging area, as the major share out of total fish production due to introduction of various culturable species viz. Indian major carps, catfish, murrel, tilapia and shrimps, besides natural harvest from seasonal tanks, ponds and reservoirs.<sup>2</sup>

Fisheries Department of Tamilnadu states that Tamilnadu is one of the leading States in India in Fisheries Development having coastal length of 1076 km. Tamilnadu is bordered on the north by Andhrapradesh State, on the north west by Karnataka state, on the west by Kerala state and on the east and south by the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Tamilnadu has an area of 1,30,058sq.km. (50,216 sq.miles). The geographical position of Tamilnadu state lies between north latitude to 8o 5' and 13o35' east longitude between 76o 15' and 80o 20'. It is separated from Srilanka by narrow palk strait. The climate is tropical. The temperature during summer reaches 40oC and in winter it rarely falls below 20oC. Rain fall occurs during the North east monsoon period from the months of October to December. The normal annual rain fall is 915 m.m. The total population of Tamilnadu is 6,24,05,679. The per capita income at current price is Rs.23,476 and at constant price Rs.13,423.

The department of fisheries in Tamilnadu is one of the oldest departments started during 1907. The department has pioneered many fishery development activities in India. The two broad objectives of the department are to Develop and conserve the fisheries resources and ameliorate the socio Economic status of the fisherfolk in the state.

The different types of aquatic resources in Tamilnadu like marine, freshwater, brackish water, riverine stretches and cold water streams in upland area are bestowed with rich biodiversity of aquatic fauna and flora. There are 2500 species of fishes found in different aquatic environment. The fisheries in the state are one of the vital sources for food security. Rivers, reservoirs and aquaculture are the main sources of inland fisheries. Physical characteristics, the socio-economic-cultural environment and the institutional arrangements for managing fish production and associated activities are the most important factors in determining the productivity.<sup>3</sup>

More than one million fishermen are engaged in catching and supplying much needed fish to the populations in Tamilnadu. Besides a large number of farmers are engaged in aquaculture which is the major growing sectors of state. The demand for fish has been on the raise but the supply from capture fisheries has been stagnated and efforts have been made to increase the fish production from the current level of 4.47 lakhs tonnes. The Government of Tamil Nadu has recognised the growing importance of fish in diets of people and necessity of improving the livelihoods of large numbers of fishers who are dependent on fishing. In order to accomplish these necessities, the Government of Tamil Nadu has established a separate Fisheries University through Tamil Nadu Fisheries Act No. 21 of 2012<sup>4</sup> To improve returns to fishermen and provide better products for consumers, several states have organized marketing cooperatives for fishermen. Nevertheless, most traditional fishermen rely on household members or local fish merchants for the disposal of their catches. In some places, marketing is carried on entirely by fisherwomen who carry small quantities in containers on their heads to nearby places. Good wholesale or retail markets are rare.

Modern technology was introduced into fishing in India apparently under the assumption that there were stocks of fish in the sea that could be caught in any quantity, and that the existing artisanal technology was inefficient for this purpose. Craft and gear were 'modernised' in order to catch large quantities of traditional as well as hitherto unexploited varieties for the domestic market and to earn the foreign exchange necessary for the import of newer technology. The introduction of modern technology did result in a boom, setting off a spurt in the construction of infrastructural facilities such as fishing harbours, large landing sites, cold storages and processing plants, apart from new markets and marketing infrastructure. Development became synonymous with modern technology that yielded high profits.

Women play a vital role in the system generally by marketing the fish or by making nets. Unfortunately such a division of labour invariably implies that the woman's contribution is less worthy. However, as Alice Schlegel (Ed. *Sexual Stratification: A cross cultural study*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1977.) says "...under conditions of subsistence, the inter dependence and complementarity of the separate male and female domains of work is the characteristic mode, based on diversity, not inequality."<sup>5</sup>



### **Conclusion**

The review presented above clearly shows that a number of continuous steps have been taken by the Government of India and its states for the development of Fisheries Sector. Many institutes, organisations, universities, etc. have been playing vital role in changing the infrastructure of fisheries sector at their level best. But still, the social and economic problems faced by fishers are huge and they need to be addressed by the respective governments.

### **Refrence**

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