

Capacity building workshop on Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
For Raigad and Ratnagiri districts
21st January 2016
10 am – 5.00 pm
- Workshop Report

The workshop was held at the Sanskar hall, Malvan, it was attended by 46 participants including 30 women and 16 men from fishing communities, Fisheries cooperatives, community organisations, government representatives (Malvan Municipal corporation) and NGO's participated in the workshop. (Appendix 1 – List of participants). Fisheries department officials though given invitation remained absent from the workshop proceedings.

The workshop started with a brief welcome by Ms Shuddhawati Peke, Program associate of ICSF who explained the purpose of the workshop. Mariette Correa, senior Program coordinator of ICSF then briefly gave history and overview of the VGSSF explaining the process of its development, its key aspects. It was followed by brief talk on VGSSF guidelines by Shuddhawati Peke, she introduced main components of VGSSF guidelines to the participants in Marathi. She acknowledged the fact that even Marathi is distant language to local tongue *Malvani* and she may not know the exact fisheries issues like local activist do so she requested Mahendra Paradkar to present VGSSF guidelines in local language. Dilip Ghare, Secretary of "Sindhudurga district *Rapan* Macchimar Sangha" requested to speak before the gathering. He introduced work of ICSF briefly to the participants and remembered Chandrika Sharma, Ex-executive secretary of ICSF as the person behind the formation of SSF guidelines. He said, Chandrika Sharma of ICSF took him to Delhi, made him travel seven coastal states and enabled him to speak in Marine Protected area workshop held at Delhi. He asked everybody present to observe 2 minute silence in memory of Chandrika Sharma who is missing since ill fated MH-370 plane incident.

Shuddhawati Peke then invited Mahendra Paradkar of "*Vikas Adyayan Kendra*" to present VGSSF guidelines in local language relating it to the local context and examples. Mahendra Paradkar said they need to first decide who small scale fishermen are. Like in Malvan there are many categories from Rapan net to purse seine net to mini purse seine. Are they going to include mini purse seine as small scale fishers? He touched upon environmental and Biodiversity issues asking what fisherman do when dolphin and turtles comes in his net. Is there a need to sensitise fishermen about destructive fishing methods and nets and to spare biodiversically important species. He spoke about tenure rights by explaining situation in *Nivati* village; government had issued notices to them claiming their land under streets and homes. Many fishers in Sindhudurga district have made tourist related facilities as their second income or alternative income. Many youth have joined or formed groups to cater tourist needs for coastal tourism. Recently government tried to demolish such unregulated tourism activities with much uproar from locals; in such cases how fishers do protects their customary rights. While speaking on sustainable resource management he stressed on disadvantages of purse seine net relating it to recent struggle at Achara village where more than 200 small scale fishers including women were arrested for fight against Purse seine netters. He demanded to accept and implement Somawanshi committee report strictly. While explaining gender equality component of the VGSSF guidelines he observed that gender equality is the ancient feature of fishing communities where women are equal bread earners as their men folk and even women have more responsibility of family so almost all family related or business

related decisions are taken by women. In current context though situation is different but still he find women of fishing communities aggressive and active in personal and social sphere. One of the participants Sanjay Keluskar then added explaining how male traders bring fish from Goa, trade fish on the beach itself making loss to women vending in fish markets. Mahendra Paradkar said "Vikas Adyayan Kendra" organisation he is working with has taken up a task to survey of fisherwomen relating to health and occupation aspects. He intends to work with women fish vendors and fishworkers issues closely in coming years. He didn't touch upon disaster management and climate change and last component of VGSSF.

Shuddhawati Peke then introduced group work to the participants explaining what should be discussed in each group and points to be presented after discussion. Participants were divided in to seven groups based on counting 1-7 numbers by participants, each group was assigned one component of VGSSF guidelines to discuss referring to Marathi version of guidelines and discussion note.

After lunch, Sanjay Keluskar from Talashil village presented their groups discussion on governance of Tenure. He said that existing regulations like CRZ can be tweaked to accommodate needs of industries and big projects but fisher's houses though protected in regulation can be demolished on one government order. He said all fishing villages, fisher's houses near to creeks and beaches should get complete protection. Jaihari Kochrekar, Sarpanch of Talashil village in the middle of presentation got up to explain CRZ provisions as not all the participants were aware of that. He said CRZ notification has protected fisher's houses and coastal ecology by making zones and providing guidelines on what kind of development can takes place in each Zone. Ravikiran toaraskar Executive committee member of National Fishworkers Forum added on CRZ discussion and requested everybody to study CRZ notification, buy CRZ map of their village and look for survey no and in which Zone they fall. On this Madhuri Pavekar a fish vendor stood up and said there is no protection for small fish vendors if only big fishers get to fish like purse seiners, small/ marginal workers will be protected only when we protect small scale fisheries.

Suhas Toraskar presented on behalf of second group who discussed on Sustainable Resource Management. He said traditional fishers' whose interest is in sustainable livelihood and who doesn't treat fishing as a business for profit such small fishers should be given priority for fishing. Purse seiners timing, net, area should be controlled strictly. Government must urgently control the no of fishing boats at the sea, implement Somwanshi committee report. He said they have local governance among fishers to resolve disputes over fishing grounds, between boat owner and crew member. He reflected on approach of fisheries officers and government bodies towards small scale fishers, he said they neglect small scale fishers needs, complaints made by them against big players in fishing, even in incidences like *Achara* village officials were responsible for harassment of fishworkers. He suggested having 3 months monsoon ban for all including small scale and big fishers. They also felt that government has to reconsider its mechanisation and more production oriented fishing policies. Another representative of their group, 70 year old women fish vendor added to his points voicing women fish vendors concerns she said they don't get anymore enough fish to vend, their market is getting redeveloped but there is not enough space provided to accommodate all existing fish vendors, there are no social security safety nets to compensate for income loss in monsoon months, pension and insurance. Haribhau Kocharekar added to some of the points saying women fish vendors in fact every fishworkers should get license from fisheries department. He demanded that no new license for new boats particularly purse seine and trawlers.

Third group spoke on Social Development, employment and Descent work. Representative of the

group Mr. Kambale said they don't get protection to fishers as they have for farmers and cultivators. First action to take is to stop giving new licenses to purse seiners and trawling fishing control. They demanded to have strict control over fishing grounds as no boat from other state can enter and fish in their waters likewise no purse seiner can come take away fish meant for *rapans*. Second thing is to provide infrastructure to women related activities' like jetty, insulated fish boxes, transport, cold storage and registration of women involved in fisheries etc. Third thing is related to education and health facilities to fishing communities. They demanded for scholarships schemes for children from fishing families and priority in marine or fishery related skills and jobs in such institutions. For descent work government needs to control activities like purse seine, this can cause crimes like in *Achara* village incident where women and men fishworkers were arrested for nothing. They also said that large scale fishing operations create strong divide within fishing communities at economic, social and cultural level, government needs to understand the longer impacts of its policies on communities. Such disparity eventually leads to social crimes like theft, violence and depression. To ensure overall social development of fishers their group suggested to have fishers awareness session on regular basis and necessary infrastructure for that.

Akanksha Kandalgaoakar spoke on behalf of her group on Post harvest and value chain. She gave an excellent presentation on situation of women in fishing communities. She herself is the community organiser and district President of "*Adhar Mahila Mahasangha*." She highlighted role women play in fishing business, household and at community level. Agents do fish marketing on weight/KG basis while women vendors sell on per piece or wata basis. There are many issues in fish marketing, lack of infrastructure even basic facilities at market, more number of women and government making fish market only for few vendors leading to conflict, even women are not consulted while designing fish market etc. She praised recent struggle in which women fishworkers of *Achara* village and Shramik Macchimar Sangha leaders played a vital role, they went to jail for small scale fishers demand to control purse seine fishing. Finally she kindled the hope in the participants to fight strongly no matter how many villains or difficulties may come.

Jaihari Kocharekar of group on gender Equality said women needs to be included more in policy making. There should be ban on fish coming from Goa as it is loss to local women fish vendors. One of the major concerns for women in their area is to get fuel like wood to cook food and other household necessities, government should consider of giving fuel efficient technologies to women and also adequate water supply to fishing villages. Second Last group on disaster risks and Climate change said last year's rainfall was even smaller than earlier years. They observed that now sea has remained with only 30 % of fish seed and 119 fish species have vanished from fishermens nets. They have not seen lobsters or taken taste of them for years now. They cannot predict climate and weather changes for fishing as earlier, traditional fishermen are helpless about climate now. Government is very ignorant towards disaster they give indication when disaster struck the coast. Their presentation ended with demands for government provision timely access to weather information and disaster signals to all fisherfolk and to promote sustainable fishing practises.

Narayan Kubal of last group on Policy coherence and enabling environment spoke on different projects and government activities that are running to protect the biodiversity of the area. He said currently UNDP is engaging women of fisheries cooperatives for crab culture. Government has many schemes but it won't reach many and the main hurdle is condition of BPL. This condition must be removed. Fishing settlements needs to have separate scheme and funds for health, education. Women self help groups can play important role in village development if equipped with necessary capacity and infrastructure.

Shuddhwati Peke then invited Panellists on dais to speak on fisheries management and role of their

organisations in the area. Mahendra Paradkar of Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, Ramesh Dhuri of Shramik Macchimar Sangha, Ravikiran Toraskar of NFF, Daya Patki of UNDP-GOR project, Anil Gawade of Nagarik Sewa Pratisthan, Ujwala Patil of Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samittee and Khalil Wasta of Ratnagiri small scale fishers organisation. Panellists were mainly fishworkers leaders and NGO representatives working in fisheries management area. They were given 10 minutes to speak on their organisations work in fisheries management area.

Mahendra Paradkar was requested to speak first; he said he used to work as Journalist with “*Tarun Bharat*” but now he independent journalist and has joined Vikas Adhyayan Kendra (VAK) to work more closely with fishworkers issues at grassroots level. Recently he with other officials of VAK has done fact finding report for *Achara* incident where fishworkers were held in custody for 3 days and some of the leaders of Shramik Macchimar Sangha are still on parole. Their role in fisheries management can be kept at research level up till now but they have helped in putting factual information to larger public and organised discussions over the *Achara* incident to clear the position of small scale fishworkers. He shared that he is looking forward to health and livelihood survey his organisation is working on with women fish vendors. Daya Patki representing UNDP-GOR Project said UNDP, Malvan Project has been working on biodiversity conservation, mangrove conservation through people’s participation and income generation activities with women’s groups. In *Achara* village they have started crab culture activities through newly formed women cooperative. She asked women to speak up in training sessions they organise as she observed women more active and contributing in current workshop. Khalil Wasta from Ratnagiri shared his experiences with purse seine net and why he has stopped it. He represented small scale fishers’ organisation in Ratnagiri. Given the industrial fishing dominated status of Ratnagiri, His was the rare voice against purse seiners in district. He sold his own purse seine once he realised its disadvantages for himself and for others. He shared that in *Lote Parshuram* area, they used to get lot of lobsters now they see none. He also observed that most of the authorities are corrupted and won’t listen to small scale fishers’ pleas. Now he sees all the capitalist people in fishing. He held government policies and people’s attitude responsible for current situation.

Ujwala Patil of Mumbai district women’s wing president of Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samittee stressed on sustainable development for both fishing and for fishers villages. She shared the story of Mumbai’s development plan and how people’s participation is the key to claim their rights on their land. She spoke in detail about CRZ 2011 notification entailing role of MMKS and NFF in getting protection for fisher’s houses and activities in CRZ. She suggested getting survey done in each fishing village including GPS survey and coastal zone management plan as lack of these documents are creating hurdles in development of fishing villages in Mumbai. She also informed participants about recent National Green Tribunal judgement that ruled in favour of Raigad small scale fishers. She asked participants to follow their example in surveying their village, documenting and submitting proofs to concerned authorities and fighting for just compensation and customary rights over land and sea. Then she went on explaining need to create new bylaws for women fisheries cooperatives. Women fishworkers are neglected part in fisheries at least in Maharashtra. They can not avail economic, social security and capacities building schemes and support as they dont have sound organisational structure. Fisheries department insists on having member of fisheries cooperatives that’s why as men and women work differently in fisheries their organisational needs are different and thus need different bylaws. She asked for present organisations to give support to women for their cooperatives and their capacity building.

Anil Gawade of Nagarik Sewa Pratisthan an NGO which collaborates with NETFISH spoke next. He had some interesting products to share with fishers involved in fish marketing. He said they work with SHG’s in three states Goa, Karanataka and Maharashtra. He shared some of the innovative inventions which will help women fish vendors like they have developed a bag (upto 25 Kg) in which fish can be kept fresh for 8 hours and one can travel with it in bus so protecting themself

from harassment from conductor and fellow passengers. They also arrange trainings and awareness sessions on sustainable fisheries and also help fishworkers to avail low cost technologies beneficial to their fish related operations. He also shared that in one of their trainings arranged in Panvel, only one man from Sindhudurga turned up and he would like to know how they can reach to more number of fishers.

Lastly Ramesh Dhuri a senior leader of Shramik Macchimar Sangha and permanent member of NFF was requested to speak. He reflected mainly on fishers' behaviour in recent struggle and violence that happened in *Achara* village. He observed that some of the leader even women have to control their temper while speaking. He invoked everybody to march towards parliament in NFF agitation if they want to do something for their community in March 2016. He also advised younger fisher leaders to concentrate more on fisheries issues rather than their position in organisation. He also described weakening economical position of Shramik Macchimar Sangha citing organisation is in debt for over 11 lakhs and they have to ensure that their organisation survives to support small scale fishers' cause.

The meeting ended with Ravikiran toraskar thanking ICSF and others on behalf of Sharmik Macchimar Sangha.