

Report
of the
One-day State-level Workshop
on
“Implementation of Voluntary Guidelines
for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context
of Food Security and Poverty Eradication”

held at

Malpe Fishing Harbour, Udupi district, Karnataka, India

on

6 November, 2016

At

Malpe Fish-merchants' Community Hall, Malpe Fishing Bunder,
Malpe, Udupi district, Karnataka, India

Organized by



International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) Trust

Old No 27, New No 55, College Road, Chennai 600 006

As part of the national programme of International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) Trust to disseminate and implement the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) “Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)” a state-level workshop was planned and organized by the Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee on 6 November, 2016 at Malpe, Udupi district. The Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee, promoted by the apex community organization of marine fishing communities of Karnataka (Moagaveera Mahajana Sabha), took initiatives to involve the representatives of village-level fisher groups by holding pre-workshop meetings in all the three coastal districts in Karnataka—Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada. Advance letters were sent to all the sixty-three primary units and other stakeholder groups, explaining the objectives of the proposed state-level workshop. The aims and objectives of the workshop were as follows:

1. Integrate the different forms of fishery management of regulations for implementation in order to minimize its negative impacts on small-scale fishers.
2. Modify the present fuel subsidy scheme to benefit small-scale fishers and prohibit destructive fishing practices.
3. Make fisherwomen less dependent on state support schemes through self-empowerment mechanism.
4. Integrate community-based management with increasing diversity of fishing communities.
5. Ensure minimum fishing space for small-scale fishers with increasing non-fishery activities both on the coast and also on the sea.
6. Provide more credible and easily available data on fish catch and allied information for evolving scientific management policies.
7. Ensure a better monitoring and reporting system of fish catch and other climate-related parameters.
8. Mobilize capital and technology and involvement of fishers in transforming present bottom trawling into more sustainable fishing technology which involves huge funding mobilization and involvement of community-based organizations.

Details of the Workshop Date

Venue : Malpe Fish-merchants’ Community Hall, Malpe Fishing Bunder,
Malpe, Udupi district.

Number of Participants : 83 (including 8 Fisherwomen, 2 representatives from ICSF)

Inauguration : 10 a.m -10-30a.m.

The workshop was designed in such a way that the participants would be able to establish a strong link between the current status of Karnataka marine fisheries and its governance with

the proposed implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

In the absence of a clear definition of small-scale fisheries and the need for collective action from all stakeholders, no distinction was made between small-scale and large-scale fisheries while inviting fisher groups. The workshop began at 10.00 a.m. with prayers, followed by an introduction to the SSF Guidelines, and welcome by Mr Vasudev Bolor, the general secretary of the Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee. Thereafter, the programme was inaugurated with the lighting of the lamp by Mr Yashpal Suvarna, president of the Cooperative Fish Marketing Federation of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi district. In his inaugural speech he stressed the need for uniform guidelines throughout the west and east coast of the country to provide sustainable livelihood to small-scale fishermen. He further added that the government should take immediate steps to sustain depleting marine resources. Mr Manohar Bolor, president of the Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee, presided over the function. In his presidential speech he requested all the office bearers of the sixty-three associations affiliated to the action committee to work together for the implementation of the SSF guidelines for a better future. Mr K.T. Thandel, vice president of the action committee, proposed the vote of thanks. Dr John Kurien, Dr Venugopal from ICSF, Dr Ramachandra Bhatta, emeritus scientist, Indian Council of Agricultural Research ICAR, College of Fisheries, Mangalore, Mr Nithin Kumar, vice-president of the action committee, Mr Hiriyanna T. Kediyoor, president of Malpe Fishermen Association, Mr Saadhu Salian, president of Malpe Fish Merchant's Association and Mr Ganapathi Bhat, joint director, Department of Fisheries, Government of Karnataka, were present on the dais. The programme was compered by Dr Gunakar, assistant professor, Pompei College, Aikala.

The participants in the workshop included the office bearers of sixty-three associations spread across three districts (Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada) of coastal Karnataka which are affiliated to the Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee, including the Traditional Fishermen Association, Trawl Boat Fishermen Association, Purse-seine Boat Fishermen Association, Deep-sea Boat, Fish Workers Association, fisheries cooperatives, fisherwomen associations, joint director and assistant director of the fisheries department, government officials of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), forest department officials, officials of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), representatives of NGOs, president and secretaries of fishermen village.

During the inaugural session, Dr John Kurien spoke about his international experience of working with community-based organizations to introduce sustainable harvesting practices. His unique experience in Indonesia and Cambodia's Mekong floodplains fisheries provided an excellent base for further discussion. Mr Yashpal Suvarna, explained the current problems of the fishing communities in Karnataka. Dr Gunakar presented detailed Kannada version of the SSF Guidelines which generated excited discussion.

Technical Session 1 : 10:30 a.m

After the inaugural function, the first technical session began at 10.30 a.m. In order to give a broad idea about the SSF Guidelines, it was translated into Kannada. Dr S. Gunakar made a power point presentation on the history, objectives and principles of SSF Guidelines. Further, in detail he explained the guidelines on five components:

1. Governance of tenure in small-scale fisheries and resource management,
2. Social development, employment and decent work,
3. Value chains, post-harvest and trade,
4. Gender equality, and
5. Disaster risks and climate change.

He also explained how these guidelines would benefit fishermen communities. After the presentation, participants were encouraged to raise questions, and solutions for the problems to be faced in the implementation of SSF Guidelines were discussed.

Technical Session 2 : 12 noon - 1.00 p.m.

Topic : Karnataka Fisheries: Recent Development

Resource Persons : Dr Ramachandra Bhatta (Emeritus Scientist, ICAR, College of Fisheries, Mangalore) and Dr S. Gunakar, Pompei College, Aikala

After the first technical session followed by discussion, Dr Ramachandra Bhatta and Dr Gunakar provided a broad picture of the developments in the marine fisheries sector over the last twenty years, concentrating on how these changes affected the food security and livelihood aspects of small-scale fishermen. In the presentation, Dr Bhatta highlighted how the coastal space available to fishermen has declined due to increased built-up area in coastal area by comparing the satellite picture of coastal areas in the years 2000 and 2010. He also emphasized how fish is costlier when compared to egg and meat. In the second session, questions related to sustainability of fishery resource were raised and clarifications made. Both presentations were in Kannada.

Technical Session 3 : 2.30 p.m - 4.30 p.m.

Group discussion

Group discussions were arranged after lunch. The participants were divided into three groups (one women and two men groups). Each group was given two sets of questions on two different issues, typed in Kannada. In each group one leader was selected to note down the discussion and present the group discussion report.

Group I: Governance of Tenure and Sustainable Resource Management

About customary tenure rights the group opined that in most coastal areas, beach space available for fishing activities had declined drastically due to erosion, tourism, setting up industries, climate change, disasters (natural and human made), and other allied reasons. It threatened the livelihood of traditional fishermen as they do not get space for operating shore-seines and also for landing their vessels. They complained that though there are spaces in some areas, such spaces are not available to the fishing activities, especially for fish drying, curing and processing, mainly due to the development of tourism and establishment of industries in the areas. In the past, government reserved (notified) some of the coastal land for fish curing purposes, but today such land are diverted for non-fishing activities. Most of the coastal lands are controlled by the port department; as a result there is a scarcity of land for constructing basic infrastructural facilities at the fishing harbour. They complained that due to the discharge of industrial effluents [Udupi Power Coporation Limited (UPCL), Baden Aniline and Soda Factory (BASF), Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL)], pollution level has increased. The Single Point Moring of MRPL, naval base-Seabird projects has led to a decline in the fishing space as areas where fishing is prohibited has increased, thus reducing the fertile area for fish production. It was emphasized that the government shouldn't allow net manufacturing units to manufacture the destructive nets.

Fishermen from Karwar complained that the district administration evacuated the sheds in the coastal area, but such lands are not available to fishermen. They pointed out that women were not given preferential rights in tenure rights. Increased sand mining adversely affected the fish production. At Malpe port area whenever the fish curing-land would be leased out, the fisherwomen should be given the preference as they depend on such land for fish drying activities. Asked about what changes have affected the customary tenure rights, the group opined that there is no coordination among various departments of the government and as a result they failed to implement the policies of the government. The group agreed that though we have CRZ Act, it has not been implemented effectively. In the coastal area, permissions are given for developing resorts but not for constructing houses for fishermen. The group demanded that in the coastal area, there must be a reserve space for traditional fishing activities and also for the activities of fisherwomen.

The group reported that they had customary management systems related to scheduling of fishing activities, sequencing of gear use, sale of fish catch, owner-crew relations, controlling destructive fishing in their area and used to take decisions relating to fisheries, including fishing, covering the activities of women, but these systems are no longer functioning effectively. About the government-implemented management measures, the group stated that the sixty-one days fish ban has been in practice and implemented effectively. Though there are rules about monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) systems, fishing zones, mesh size regulations, destructive fishing, such rules are not implemented. The group reported that by creating more awareness about all such rules and with the cooperation of fishers these could be implemented. They felt that CRZ Notification 2011 is still to be implemented. They

opined that under Marine Fisheries Regulation (MFR) Act, when the license is given for fishing boats, it should be for five years, and thereafter it should be renewed every year. But at present the license is operational for only a year and has to be renewed every year. About the implementation of the government-led management measures, the group opined that management measures are not implemented effectively as the government does not consider the opinions of the fishers and does not allow fishers to contribute while framing policies. The group felt that there is a need for strengthening all organizations and cooperatives of fishers. All the associations should come together under one platform with proper coordination and discuss their problems to compel the government to meet their demands.

Group II: Value Chains, Post Harvest and Trade and Gender Equity

The group members stated that they have their organizations but they were not given a chance to be present in the local decision-making processes relating to fisheries. They remarked that though a few capacity development training programmes were organized for a limited number of people to produce good quality fish and fishery products for both domestic and export markets, there is no support after training and no follow-up from the government. They stated that in most of the landing centres, processing and storage areas and fish markets there is no adequate and suitable basic infrastructure, amenities and services to meet their business and personal needs. The group members spoke about losses in fish supply chains which in turn results in increase in their costs and reduces their incomes. To reduce the loss of quality of fish, the group suggested that fisherwomen must be given big-size icebox and there must be a cold-storage facility at landing centres. Further, they stated that though they are given the icebox through government schemes, they are not available equitably to all of them.

The group stated that there is no women group engaged in supplying fish and fishery products to international markets and they are willing to take up such activities, provided there is a support and assistance from the government. The members found that as a result of export of fish to international markets, fisherwomen could not get sufficient fish to trade in the local market which in turn affected their food security. They complained that no timely and adequate market information are available to them to earn better returns. They suggested that at the landing centres fishermen should give preference to fisherwomen while auctioning/selling fish.

The group opined that fear of losing livelihood kept the women away from decision-making process. Further, lack of information, awareness and coordination also constrained the women's equitable participation in decision-making process. They stated that changes in the fisheries sector substantially affected their livelihood in the form of non-availability of fish in adequate quantity, decline in coastal space for fish processing activities, competition from men traders and growing number of fish retailing shops. The women head loaders found it difficult to sell the fish due to two-wheeler and four-wheeler men retailers. Even in the marketplaces, women lose customers due to an increase in the number of men retailers who cover every nook and corner of the villages and cities. The group complained that as such

there are no specific government programmes/schemes which provide social security and health security to fisherwomen. Schemes like Matsya Mahila Swavalabana Yojane, Savings Cum-Relief Scheme are not big enough to meet or compensate the needs of the fisherwomen. Group accident insurance scheme and distress relief fund are not reaching the people properly. They suggested that there must not be any age restriction while sanctioning benefits (compensation/insurance) to the injured or deceased fish worker under any social security measures. They also articulated the urgent need to formulate a policy to provide rights over coastal land, social security measures (specific to fishermen and fisherwomen engaged in fishing and related activities) and also to extend a credit facility like in the agriculture sector. The group found that though there are organizations at different levels to provide support in their activities, these are not functioning effectively. Proper coordination is required among them.

Group III: Disaster Risks and Climate Change, Social Development, Employment and Decent Work

The group suggested that:

- Before sanctioning the setting up of an industry in coastal areas, the government needs to discuss the matter with the fishermen organization by taking them into confidence and take suitable measures to retain and develop the fisheries. Steps must be taken to avoid sea and air pollution. Due to insufficient flow of water into sea during the rainy season, the quantum of nutrients available to fish has declined. Therefore, the government should take sufficient measures to retain the forest areas to get rainwater.
- In order to provide better health, sanitation, water supply, education to the fishermen families, there is a need to develop fishermen colonies in coastal areas.
- All the line departments such as housing, environment and ecology, public works, etc., related to fisheries should protect the livelihood of the fishermen through proper coordination and consultations among themselves.
- All fishermen communities should be included in SC/ST category as they are more disadvantaged educationally and socially, than other communities.
- There is a need for uniform law related to fisheries throughout the west coast.
- The group stated that most of the disasters and climate changes are due to human actions. The current disaster preparedness and mitigation processes are inadequate in helping the small-scale fisheries (SSF) actors address the threats posed by natural and manmade disasters. There is lack of sufficient information in advance about the disasters.

All group leaders made presentations of their group recommendations before it was accepted by the house. The meeting closed with a few action points for taking the guidelines forward and a vote of thanks.