

ICSF KILA

Workshop on Sea Safety and Fisheries Management: Training and Capacity Development of Local Self Governments, Kerala.

Group Discussion

Questions for Discussion

- I. Do you agree that local panchayats/municipalities have a role in improving safety at sea related to fishing and climate change impacts? If so, what role? Do you have experiences to share?
- II. How can local self-government institutions contribute to greater awareness of sea safety?
- III. Do you agree that effective fisheries management can contribute to improved sea safety? How can local self-government institutions contribute to raising awareness about fisheries management?
- IV. How can local self-government institutions improve sea safety preparedness, strengthen community participation and improve coordination across agencies to reduce accidents and fatalities at sea?

GROUP 01

Major Points Discussed

- Panchayats and municipalities can play a significant role in improving safety at sea related to fishing and climate change impacts. Here are some ways they can contribute:
 - Enhancing communication, convergence and coordination: Panchayats and municipalities can establish a communication network and coordination mechanism between fishermen and relevant authorities, such as the Coast Guard, fisheries department and meteorological department, to ensure timely dissemination of information related to weather conditions, sea hazards, and rescue operations.
 - Promoting safety measures: Panchayats and municipalities can create awareness among fishermen about safety measures such as the use of life

jackets, emergency communication devices, and safe navigation practices. They can also facilitate the provision of such safety equipment to fishermen.

- Monitoring fishing activities: Panchayats and municipalities can monitor fishing activities to ensure compliance with regulations related to fishing gear, fishing zones, and prohibited fishing practices. This can help reduce the incidence of accidents at sea.
- Encouraging sustainable fishing practices: Panchayats and municipalities can promote sustainable fishing practices that reduce the impact of fishing on marine ecosystems and improve the resilience of fish stocks to climate change. This can include the establishment of marine protected areas, the promotion of selective fishing methods, and the regulation of fishing seasons and quotas.
- Developing early warning systems: Panchayats and municipalities can develop early warning systems to alert fishermen about impending weather events or sea hazards. This can help fishermen avoid risky fishing grounds and return to shore safely.
- Developing better region-specific Disaster Management Plans: Panchayats and Municipalities can develop region-specific disaster management plans and can train ERT (Emergency Response Team) members according to it with more focused and region-specific scientific researches by the assistance of institutions like KSDMA.

Altogether, panchayats and municipalities can contribute significantly to improving safety at sea related to fishing and climate change impacts by enhancing communication and coordination, promoting safety measures, monitoring fishing activities, encouraging sustainable fishing practices, and developing early warning systems.

➤ Sustainable fisheries management can be achieved through LSGIs in the following ways:

- Enforcement of fishing and safety regulations: LSGIs can enforce fishing regulations to prevent overfishing and protect fish stocks and through safety regulations can ensure the safety of both fisher folk communities. This can include setting limits on the size and number of fish that can be caught, enforcing closed seasons, prohibiting destructive fishing practices, restricting fishing during vulnerable climatic conditions, and registering the

in and out movement of each and every vessel and fisherman can help in effective search and rescue missions.

- Community participation: LSGIs can encourage community participation in fisheries management by involving local fisherfolk in decision-making processes (like effective and democratic forums like MATSYASABHA). This can help to ensure that local knowledge and perspectives are taken into account in the management of fisheries resources and sea safety.
- Management of fish landing centers: LSGIs can manage fish landing centers, which are important for the storage and distribution of fish collected by the fisherfolks of the community. This can include ensuring that the landing centers are well-maintained and hygienic, and that fish are handled in a sustainable and responsible manner.
- Promotion of sustainable aquaculture: LSGIs can promote sustainable aquaculture practices, such as the use of low-impact aquaculture systems, and the adoption of environmentally-friendly feed and farming techniques.
- Capacity building: LSGIs can build the capacity of local fisherfolk and other stakeholders in fisheries management, through training programs and other capacity-building initiatives. This can help to ensure that local communities are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in sustainable fisheries management.

Overall, LSGIs can play a key role in effective fisheries management and sea safety, by providing a platform for community participation, promoting sustainable practices, and enforcing regulations to protect fish stocks and ecosystems.

- Kerala's LSGIs (Local Self Government Institutions) have the potential to play an important role in improving fisheries management and sea safety, but they also pose some limitations.
 - Limited Resources: LSGIs often have limited financial and human resources to effectively manage fisheries and ensure sea safety. This can result in inadequate infrastructure, equipment, and personnel to respond to emergencies, enforce regulations, and monitor activities. Formulation of projects according to the felt needs may pave way for technical problems like audit objection as per the guideline and thereby the lapsing of the fund. For instance, as a result of the flood, silt accumulation in the Canoli canal

decreased the depth of the Chetuva river, wreaking havoc on the local ecosystem. However, the panchayat faces obstacles in the formulation of the project properly. Because it may result in audit objection since the project may not fit in the framework of guidelines provided.

- Limited Technical Expertise: LSGIs may not have the technical expertise or knowledge needed to effectively manage fisheries and ensure sea safety. This can result in inadequate planning, implementation, and monitoring of activities related to fisheries management and sea safety.
- Fragmentation: The responsibilities for fisheries management and sea safety are often spread across multiple LSGIs and different departments, which can result in fragmentation and a lack of coordination. This can make it difficult to ensure consistent enforcement of regulations and effective response to emergencies.
- Lack of Authority: LSGIs may not have the legal authority or power to enforce regulations related to fisheries management and sea safety. This can result in a lack of compliance with regulations and an inability to effectively manage fisheries and ensure sea safety.
- Political Interference: LSGIs can be subject to political interference, which can result in decisions being made for political rather than scientific or practical reasons. This can compromise the effectiveness of fisheries management and sea safety efforts.

In a nutshell, while LSGIs can play an important role in fisheries management and sea safety, these limitations need to be considered in order to ensure the effective and sustainable management of fisheries and the safety of the sea in Kerala. It is important to address these limitations through appropriate capacity building and institutional strengthening measures.

GROUP 02

Major Points Discussed

(i) Do you agree that local panchayats/municipalities have a role in improving safety at sea related to fishing and climate change impacts? If so, what role? Do you have experiences to share?

Currently panchayaths doesn't have any active role in ensuring sea safety related to fishing and climate change impacts. Specific projects targeting fishers is implemented through the fisheries officer. Panchayaths need to have an active role, but doesn't have capacity to take up more work considering the lack of human resources. There has to be better co-ordination between the LSGs and the fisheries department.

Suggestion: It was suggested that atleast panchayths from the coastal belt and panchayaths bordering with backwaters should be given one fisheries officer each.

b. Matsyasabha also need to be strengthened by ensuring the participation of fishers by organizing it on days (ex. Sunday) considering the availability of fishers

Role of LSGs: a. LSGs should co-ordinate with the fisheries department in managing and developing traditional and notified landing (beach) centres. Infrastructure facilities like storage units and processing centres not to be attached to these. There needs to be an integration to pool resources for the development of these infrastructures.

b. Timely compensation for the workdays lost owing to bad weather notification from the government can be distributed through LSGs.

c. Matsyafed insurance premium can be paid through LSGs. These points need to be included in the current guidelines

d. As a better monitoring strategy for ensuring sea safety, vessel movement monitoring facility needs to be installed in the landing sites (for eg: QR code-based system, punching facility) and the LSGs could take up the responsibility of managing the same.

(ii) How can local self-government institutions contribute to greater awareness about sea safety?

a. Now the awareness trainings are offered through the fisheries department, LSGs are not directly involved in this. There should be co-ordinated action between the department and LSGs and LSGs should get actively involved since local representatives can facilitate a wider participation.

b. Such awareness drives should also include other stakeholders like boat owners, traders and community leaders. Sometimes, fishermen are forced to go to the sea by these stakeholders even in the event of an alert from the government systems.

c. Segregated data on weather information for coastal waters and high seas needs to be given separately. Most of the weather communications relayed now is of no importance to small scale fishers.

(iii) Do you agree that effective fisheries management can contribute to improved sea safety? How can local self-government institutions contribute to raising awareness about fisheries management?

- a. By using innovative and interactive methods like use of social media, popular art etc
- b. Through installation of digital information boards sharing necessary realtime information

- c. If given an enforcement capacity in a designated territory within the territorial waters (say for example, 3 NM as in the case of Indonesia), LSGs could ensure sustainable measures like minimum legal size of the catch, use of banned fishing nets, mesh size etc.

(iv)How can local self-government institutions improve sea safety preparedness, strengthen community participation and improve coordination across agencies to reduce accidents and fatalities at sea

- a. Collaborate with the fisheries department in developing an emergency response team locally involving the community. These team should be equipped and trained in the use of search and rescue methods like that of drones and need to be trained to offer emergency medical services. Provisions and equipment for this team like life jackets, fuel, first aid kit can be provided through the LSGs
- b. Enhance the role and space for LSGs to co-ordinate search and rescue communication and operations thereby ensuring timely response.
- c. Develop a safety protocol for sea safety at the local level including suggestions made earlier to strengthen a bottom-up approach. Financial resources can be pooled through government and non-government institutions for setting up the same.

GROUP 03

Major points discussed

- Establishing a unique Emergency Response Team (ERT) of fishermen is crucial for disaster management and marine security. Under such circumstances, it is possible to make use of the community's local expertise in the fishing community.
- Each coastal village should have a plan in place for managing marine disasters which anticipates potential calamities, adaptability, rescue measures, and roles and duties for institutions.
- It is important to recognize the fishing community's right to representation in decisions regarding programs that affect them. This representation should encompass diverse perspectives from individuals of different genders, occupations, and political backgrounds. Ensuring their presence may require careful consideration of timing and location, and a top-level structure should be established to guarantee accountability
- To improve data management, weather and disaster information, and safety messaging, there should be greater adoption of technology, such as a digital studio in all local bodies.
- Increasing awareness of the fishing industry's rights can be achieved through formal and informal activities involving community members, officials, legislators, and the public.
- To respond effectively during disasters, multiple departments, including fisheries, coastal police, and technical specialists, must work together in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

- Giving awareness on the significance of life-saving equipment, such as life jackets, life buoys, VHF radios, flares, and fire extinguishers, and regularly updating technologically advanced tools is important to ensure sea safety.
- Establishing the Marine Haritha Karma Sena with the participation of the fishing community has the potential to effectively address the issue of marine garbage. Cooperation of recycling plastic recycling units can provide them work fees.
- Improvement amenities in harbours to reduce dangers for fishermen.

Local authorities can take proactive measures in all the above-mentioned areas to ensure sea safety. However, they face limitations within government institutions and financial constraints which could negatively impact the fishing community's well-being. It is crucial that adequate human and financial resources are available to prevent such limitations.