

XI.A.1. Impact of Modernised Fishing on Marine Ecology : Challenges by the Traditional Sector

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Since Independence trawlers and mechanised boats on large-scale have entered in the marine fishery with an objective to modernise this sector. The policy of the Government of India to export shrimp has also accelerated the intensity and expanse of fishing in the marine sector. The fishing policy of the Government has neither contained environmental concern nor the well being of the local community. Profit motive has not allowed to reconcile with environmental good, to take into account the stock of natural resources and life systems of the local community. Due to this lacking prediction of the environmental consequences of a proposed developmental activity has not taken place. The potential risks of massive over fishing and consequential imbalance in the marine eco-system have not been foreseen. Cost assessment of environmental damages has been missing. No appropriate measure has been adopted to avoid, mitigate and compensate the environmental loss.

Indiscriminate fishing has resulted in the destruction of ferry of fishes. The stock availability for fishing in the traditional small sector has declined fast. Several species of fish have soon disappeared from the marine bed and fishing period has got shrunk. Within a span of two to three decades the fish resources and the economy of this sector has faced the challenge of survival. Environmental damage, caused by new commercial ventures, could hardly be controlled through laws and regulations. Two essential elements of modernisation e.g., continuing sophistication of equipments and exploration of wider commercial markets have not been within the financial capacity of the traditional fish workers. This has made majority of the small-scale fish workers to live at the mercy of money lenders, merchants, monopolists, exporters and multinationals.

Eventually, the fishing community has begun to challenge the new fishing policy. They have termed 100% EOUs and de facto full control of the vessels in the hands of (he foreign skipper suicidal to ecological and economic environment. A process of intervention, socialisation and mobilisation of the community has started. The traditional fish workers have proposed multi-dimensional strategy to ensure sustainability of marine resources as well as their collective life system. Integration of the common interests of different segments of the fishing community has begun. Various preventive steps have been proposed to a rest further depletion of marine resources so that the dichotomy of demand and supply does not invite crisis to the long-term benefits of the traditional fishing community. There have been attempts to look at the cost-effective fishing policy from people's perspective. Participation of the fish workers in natural resource management and in the design and construction of technologies in the fishing sector has been made mandatory. In the process linkages between women and environmental concerns have

come up for sustainable use of natural resources. Disincentives to mechanised sector and promotion of alternative incomes for the community have been proposed to reduce the possibilities of further environmental degradation. The traditional fish workers have advocated a sustainable fishing in which mechanisation is acceptable when it suits the need of the people but does not endanger the principles of sustainable development