

Stories of Impact

A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management

Fisheries Livelihood Support in India's Coastal Regions



REGION: SOUTH ASIA
FOCUS: RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE
COUNTRY: INDIA



RESULTS:

- In Tamil Nadu, nearly \$60 million were invested in two fish landing centres, reconstruction and modernization of two fishing harbors, providing permanent opening for two river bar mouths and establishing one tube ice plant.
- In Puducherry, a newly built 37,886 square-foot Puducherry Modern Hygienic Fish Market provides safe and hygienic fish storage, processing, and selling practices in adherence to the international standards.
- The Livelihood Programs, which includes aspects like macro-algal culture, fish cage culture, ready-to-eat products, and the aquaculture eco-park, benefits 300 families' livelihoods, with 400 additional families projected to benefit from the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

In India's coastal regions of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, over 200,000 families depend on fishing and related activities for their livelihoods. The coastal regions are also known to be vulnerable to numerous natural and man-made hazards, as well as ongoing environmental degradation and climate change effects.

The Sustainable Fisheries component of the World Bank-assisted Coastal Disaster Risk Reduction Project (CDRRP)—launched in 2013 by the governments of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry—commits \$82 million to improve the sustainability and resilience of fisheries in the coastal regions by upgrading infrastructure, provide work shelters and fish landing centers, modernize fishing harbors and fish markets, encourage ecosystem-based fisheries resource management, and improve safety at sea. The sustainable fisheries component also includes alternative livelihood activities targeting women and unemployed youth members of the fisher community. GFDRR supported the design of the component and provided expertise during implementation.

CONTEXT:

The densely-populated regions of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry together have a coastal length of more than 1,000 kilometers, making the fishing sector essential to local and regional economies. Their fish production centers are among India's major seafood producers.

Recent events like the 2004 tsunami, Cyclone Nilam in 2010, and the Chennai floods of 2015 have shown that fishery-dependent communities in the coastal areas are vulnerable not only to natural disasters and climate change, but also to the rapid degradation of marine environment. The excessive fishing pressure, unsustainable fishing methods, and non-compliance of fishing policies and regulations have contributed to the rapid depletion of marine fish stock. There is a growing need for the implementation of responsible fishing management measures and governance for the sustainability of livelihood. The CDRRP's Sustainable Fisheries component seeks to implement a local policy reform process to improve marine fisheries' performance in a sustainable way, not only strengthening the flow of social and economic benefits to coastal communities but also ensuring a healthy marine environment for future generations.

APPROACH:

Providing modern infrastructure has been a key focus of this project to enable the fisheries sector to adhere to international standards for seafood processing, storage, and export. Existing fisheries infrastructure was renovated to meet these standards, and new facilities were created to ensure safe, hygienic, sustainable, and environment-friendly practices. These new facilities include cold storage, use of ice plants for fish preservation, hygienic auction halls, and adequate clean water supply.

Moreover, under the CDRRP's Fisheries Management for Sustainable Livelihoods (FIMSUL-II) project, efforts to implement fisheries co-management (between user groups and the government), improve capacities and knowledge management, and support livelihoods and management have been undertaken. In Tamil Nadu, particularly, an effort is progressing to provide a wireless communication system for the safety of fishers at sea.

NEXT STEPS:

All facilities and infrastructure built under the CDRRP's Sustainable Fisheries component are well appreciated by the communities. However, there is a huge demand for infrastructure facilities in coastal villages which are outside the scope of the current project. The relevant government agencies need to further study the need of the infrastructure facilities and gradually scale up efforts to meet those demands. Building on the lessons learned, various Indian states are currently working towards making the co-management committees functional in the region.

Contact

Ignacio Urrutia
iurrutia@worldbank.org

Learn more at www.gfdrr.org

*ALL MONETARY VALUES IN USD



Credit: Project team/World Bank

LESSONS LEARNED:

Fisheries co-management bodies is an essential component for new facilities. To ensure that new facilities built under the CDRRP are operational and being maintained properly, each should have a dedicated managing body that includes members from the fishing community, representatives from the Fisheries Department, and the District Collector or Assistant Collector as the Chairman.

Implementation of policy for management and maintenance of fisheries infrastructure is a challenge. The management body for Puducherry Fishing Harbour, while robust on paper, is largely absent on the ground, showing that effort is needed to translate policy to action. Also, delays in creating a comprehensive list of beneficiaries for the allotment of fish vending stalls have caused the facility be unused in spite of being operational.