

Livelihood Meeting

January 9, 2005
Meeting Minutes

Chaired by Vivek, with Dhiraj

Meeting commenced at 4pm

Introductions

Vivek:

1. Livelihood issues are directly affecting fishermen, but also various other sectors of the economy.
2. Fishing
3. Fish Vending/Processing/Marketing
4. Petty Trade/Small Business
5. Farming
6. Livestock
7. Production and Service Centers such as Icemakers and Boatyards
8. Casual Labour and Other Services

(Documents handed out)

Issues surrounding Livelihood (based on discussion with the group)

- Livelihood is an extensive issue, even in areas where there was no loss of life.
- There is no reason that people can't go fishing, there are many rumours to the contrary, but these are false.
- There has been some change to the seabottom. Physical, chemical and other characteristics of the sea are being tested by scientists at the government's request.
- Villagers are preparing lists of the fishing boats and equipment that have been lost. Some are exaggerated, but does it really matter?
- Fishing totals have been dwindling over the last four years, though more expensive boats have been going out. Therefore there is a saturation and we see that there is already an overinvestment in Tamilnadu.
- Government isn't saying "no" to boat replacements, yet there is a danger to indiscriminate distribution of new boats.
- There are virtually no co-owned boats, most are individually or family-owned.
- Alternative employment for fishermen is not easy and probably only viable for the next generation.
- Per the G.O. (handed out) some amounts of compensation will be paid, depending on the type of boat lost, but it doesn't mean that the payment covers the actual replacement cost.
- Trawlers number about 50,000 in all India and this is doing much damage. Ideally these numbers will be reduced.
- Why are we giving out cash payments? – the government has already started to issue cheque payments. Note that there is no audit process for payments made as relief - however, this statute expires on January 23rd, 2005.
- Let's look at communication and safety as areas to help the fishermen – ie. Mobile phones could be provided for free, with fishermen covering operating costs only.

- Uncontrolled replacement of equipment could lead to problems. We must keep this in mind as we look at NGO efforts.
- We need to know what the government is thinking and what they'll come up with.

Moving on...

- SHG's are considerable and of varied capacity. We will try to classify the capacities of the smaller organizations. Dhiraj will assist anyone who wishes to look after leadership in working within this sector.

Moving on...

- Are there any reports on agriculture, farming and livestock issues? Yes, channels are being dug, soil reclamation is going on, cashew seedlings have been planted along the coastal belt.
- Human Rights Forum for Dalits Liberation (Tamilnadu) hands out a document on the most affected Dalit villages. Vivek agrees that this will be taken up at the Coordination Center Level.

The meeting concluded with various groups joining up within four specialized sectors:

1. Fishing
2. Women's Self Help Groups
3. Agriculture
4. Dalits

All were invited to contact Dhiraj for further information at the Secretariat 252800, or directly at 98429-02375.

Meeting concluded – next meeting date/time to be determined. For further information please contact *Ngo Center Desk*