**KDFSF PROFILE**



Email : [kdfsfadmin@gmail.com](mailto:kdfsfadmin@gmail.com)

Address

Kanyakumari District Fishermen Sangams Federation (KDFSF)

Reg No . 16/84

16, Parker Street

Nagercoil , Kanyakumari District

Tamilnadu

Pin - 629001

History

Kanyakumari District Fishermen Sangams’ Federation (KDFSF) is a welfare organization established solely for the welfare of fisher folk inhabited at the coastal belt of Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea of the District. The early seventies, a time of severe exploitation made by middle men and fish merchants against the traditional fishermen, who engaged in small scale fishing. In the meantime, Kottar Roman Catholic Diocease intervened to redeem the traditional fishermen from the clutches of the agents and the middlemen. Kottar Social Service Society (KSSS) of Kottar Diocease organized young fishermen societies are known as Fish Marketing Societies (FMS). Fr.James Tomber played the instrumental role in organizing those grumbling artisanal fishermen towards the formation of Fishermen Societies in 1973.

These Societies took a momentous decision in 1983 to form an Apex Body in the district level for protection, growth and development in socio-economic levels of the small-scale fishing community. Out of their resolve was born KDFSF (Kanyakumari District Fishermen Sangams’ Federation). Founders made the members to believe that the Federation was not for the powerful but the power which was inherent and dormant that was deeply embedded in the heart of every meek individual and small fishermen group which struggle to bring a new ray of hope to the deprived community.

In 1984, KDFSF is registered under Societies Registration Act 1975.In the district, KDFSF works through the strong base of 48 fishermen societies consisting of over 3712 small-scale fishermen families in 39 coastal villages towards the integrated development of the fishermen community. The federation has promoted 810 Joint Liability Groups (JLG) with 4043 women members.

Introduction

The Kanyakumari District Fishermen Sanghams Federation (KDFSF) is a community owned and community managed federation of 48 artisanal sea going fishermen collectives registered as societies. The member base of KDFSF is 3712 fishing units. The federation has promoted 810 Joint Liability Groups (JLG) with 4043 women members. KDFSF is a member of the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) which has presence across the southern coast from Malabar in Kerala to Chennai in Tamil Nadu. The International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) has been supporting activities of KDFSF and two other federations of Tamil Nadu over the past 7 years. IFAD has partnered with the Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN) and extended support to these fishermen federations. The support of IFAD and other donor agencies has helped KDFSF foster strong ties with the members and other stake holders like the DoF, Insurance Companies and Nationalized Banks. There has been a strong felt need of scaling the interventions to higher level of revenue and realization for the produce and KDFSF and other member federations of SIFFS in Tamil Nadu has been considering improving the institutional capacity for fish marketing and trading in local and distant markets. IFAD expressed willingness to support such an initiative and KDFSF has developed this proposal with the support consultants that has expressed willingness to get into a MoU for support towards conceptualization, establishment and management of the proposed marketing initiative. Upon approval of the proposal a detailed project report will be developed with field data collected through scientific study of the market and the fish value chain.

Brief about Fisher Livelihoods

The coastal communities that have been into marine fishing continue in this livelihood over successive generation and around this rest the rest of the livelihoods in marine fisheries. Though there have been various development over the decades in marine fisheries, a people centred approach is missing. Though there are modernisations of production implements and the livelihood transforming as part of global market chains, there have been challenges in this livelihood that are not addressed by any of the interventions over the decades. Fishers see issues in various fronts ranging from fear of the availability of resources, quantum and timeliness of credit, seasonal variations leading to variations in income and so on. While some of these may be larger developmental issues in a true sense, awareness on realities one hand and attitudinal changes on the other can help these communities foster a growth trajectory that is not only beneficial to the communities but also to the coastal economy.

Men mostly venture into sea and women engage in post-harvest and fish vending. In addition to the large fishing crafts, massive gears used by trawlers and other modern gears like ring siene etc. and larger fleet of craft, availability of smaller vehicles for transportation, use of plastic crates for fish handling, use of ice boxes for fish storage and transportation etc. has changed the face of fish handling and marketing.

Small Scale Fishers

Small scale fishers use passive gears that are non-exploitative in nature. They travel shorter distance normally to about 25 nautical miles into the sea. They bring fish in the range of 50 to 1000 kg per voyage when compared to about 1 ton to 15 tons kg per voyage by trawlers. The artisanal fishers do not come under the fishing ban by the government and hence they can go for fishing all throughout the year except the rough season when climatic conditions restrict venturing into the sea.

Small Scale fishing in Kanyakumari District

Kanyakumari, India’s Southern-most district has just 1% of India’s coast line but 4% of India’s See Going Fishermen. This high demographic pressure in an area where rough area conditions make fishing very difficult has made the kanyakumari fishermen daring hardly and highly skilled. This has given them the reputation for being among the best fishermen in the world. They are in demand as skilled crew on mechanized vessels in other parts of India. Some even work on fishing vessels in other countries notably in the gulf countries. Of the 80000 fishermen nearly 60% work on mechanized boats, most of them Kerala and other states of the west coast of India. The rest work on small boats (kattumaram, vallam and other small beach landing boats) with motors. Around 25000 depend significantly on fishing in local waters most of the year.

The small scale fishermen suffer for various disadvantages including exploitation by merchants, middlemen and money lenders. They are overcoming these by organising into fish marketing societies and establishing control over beach level marketing and developing financial services. In recent years new technology in the form of improved fishing boats and small out board motors has improved the productivity of small scale fishing and increased incomes. However, they also brought with them new problems of

1. Increased investment in fishing and the consequent increase in credit requirements
2. Threat of over fishing of resources.

Vision

* Economic improvement of lot of the fishermen without adversely affecting the natural resource base.
* Greater fishermen control over inputs and marketing.
* Preservation of the natural resource such that employment in the fisheries sector can be protected for the coming generation of fishermen.
* An orderly shift from fishing to other occupations by a section of the youth so that those who continue fishing can do so with dignity and good returns.

Mission

* Help the fishermen to get fair price deal for their fish by liberating them from the clutches of middle men.
* Inculcate the habit of saving among the fishermen.
* Get them loan to update the new technology of fishing.
* Organising Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) for the welfare of the fisherwomen

KDFSF Structure

The Kanyakumari District Fishermen Sangams’ Federation (KDFSF) is the apex body of 48 primary fish marketing societies covering 39 coastal villages in the district of Kanyakumari of Tamil Nadu.

KDFSF Functional Structure

Governance

KDFSF conducts one General Body meeting and eleven regular Board meetings in every year. The details of Board Members as below

The following table describes the activities at the two different levels

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Member societies | KDFSF |
| 1. Fishermen’s control over first point of sale of fish of members (beach auctions and sale to wholesalers, agents and export houses). 2. Savings to help members during lean season and emergencies. 3. Loans to help fishermen acquire fishing equipment and maintain independence from middlemen. | Member services   1. Supervision and monitoring of village societies 2. Helping village society with credit access from banks and other sources 3. Marketing support (direct assistance or just liaison with markets and companies) 4. Supply of inputs like nets, fuel, etc., at lower/competitive prices based on economies of scale 5. Welfare activities for members   Broader sectoral interventions   1. Formation of new societies. 2. Organising women JLG groups. 3. Some forays into education, environmental action, etc. |

Village Society Model

The KDFSF village society is a “commodity cooperative” model where the main target group is the sea going fishermen who are normally exploited by middlemen and moneylenders by controlling the beach level fish sales. Members of the society sell their fish catch through the society on two ways:

1. Society sells fish through a beach level auction.
2. By direct sale to wholesalers and export companies on weighing method.

**Functions on Society**

* **Auction / Weighing**
* **Transaction 1 – Salesmen (Auction)**
* **Transaction 2 – Salesmen (Weighing)**
* **Transaction 3 – Members**
* **Day-end process**
* **Month end processes**

While fish are sold on the above process the members will be given a “Chitta” (sea shore bill) for the value of auction amount by the auctioneer. And, subsequently the member brings the “Chitta” along with his passbook to the society office for the payment against the catch.

Later, the Society Clerk makes the cash payment to the member on following deduction.

1. Service charge @ 2%
2. Compulsory savings @ 3 %
3. Loan collection @ 10 % (only for those who availed loan)

These deductions for savings and loan collection are recorded immediately in the passbook and handed over to the members. The clerk registers all these transactions on the daybook, ledgers and other records required. Day to day activities and financial transactions are carried out by the society staff with the guidelines of the Executive Committee elected by the General body of the society, and with specific monitoring of staff duly appointed by the district federation for the society. The following table gives the details of the society network at the moment.

Capacity Building Activities

1. Twelve trainings were conducted for the society clerks on various topics like book keeping, statement preparation, leadership quality, credit follow-up and so on.
2. Twelve monthly meetings were conducted for all federation staff. In these meetings credit management, delinquency management, merchant dues management, fishing related problems and JLG formation were the main agenda.

External Linkages

Federation is actively collaborating with the Tamil Nadu Government under the IFAD-PTSLP project, NABARD, The Marine Product and Export Development Authority of India (MPEDA), The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) & FIMSUL. We bank with Canara Bank, College Road, Nagercoil.