

STRATEGIES FOR GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN FISHERIES TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN TSUNAMI AFFECTED AREA

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Initiatives were taken by M.S.Swaminthan Research Foundation for the long term rehabilitation of people in the 2004 Tsunami affected area. The initiatives focused on rehabilitating livelihoods and fostering sustainable livelihood security, using fisheries technology and targeting gender and social inclusion in Cuddalore and Nagappattinam districts of TamilNadu. Effective coordination was ensured with the fisherfolk communities, fisheries research institutes, leading fishery entrepreneurs, and other NGOs involved in similar activities in the Tsunami affected villages.

The microfinance prevented the fisherwomen entering into the 'debt trap'. The fisherwomen stopped taking loans from money lenders after receiving money from the 'revolving fund' from MSSRF.

The livelihoods were diversified using successful fisheries technologies, such as crab fattening and preparation of value added fishery products. An exploratory survey was conducted in the nearby backwaters, and the crab fattening activity was initiated by the fisherwomen's Self Help Group. A hands-on training programme for fisherwomen's Self Help Groups from these villages was conducted with the support of resource persons from a fisheries research institute. The strategies followed and the lessons learnt are briefly discussed in this paper.