

Small-scale fisheries and livelihoods: an overview



Rahul Muralidharan

PhD Candidate

Ashoka Trust For Research in Ecology and the Environment

Manipal Academy of Higher Education

Email: rahul.muralidharan@atree.org

Who are the small-scale fishers?

- Fish in near-shore waters, using low technology, less capital intensive techniques
- Take catch for household consumption & domestic market – important source of employment, livelihood and food security
- Women play a major role engaging in post-harvest sector
- Despite their important contribution, the small-scale fishing communities remain a marginalised population



Fisheries development in Tamil Nadu

- State-aided fisheries development in 1950 – move towards mechanisation and trawler introduction
- Violent conflict b/w artisanal & mechanised fisheries that continues till date
- Depletion of near-shore fisheries and habitats



Conservation intensification

- In tropical countries conservation efforts are focused on near-shore ecosystems: seagrass and coral reefs
- Marine protected areas (MPA) have been described as biological success but social failure
- The case of Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, India



The future of small-scale fisheries?

- The big push for deep-sea fishing (Tuna)
- Aquaculture/mariculture
- Increased resource extraction and infrastructure development along the coast
- Unregulated tourism

Ways forward

- Documenting catch, effort and contribution of SSF to socio-economic well-being
- Fisheries, food security and health
- Keep a check on technological improvements in capture fisheries
- Encouraging entrepreneurship capabilities and better education outcomes among fishing youth