DEVELOPMENT WITH JUSTICE

Proposal of a Rights Based Strategic Plan for working with the Small & Traditional fisher-folk community of Goa & Maharashtra
Research Partners

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Vasai Janhit Trust (VJT)
Sindhudurg Diocesan Development Society (SDDS)
Caritas - Goa

In Collaboration with

Western Region Social Service Forum (WRSSF)

Under the Caritas India, Micro Finance Project

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Development with Justice
Research Title:

DEVELOPMENT WITH JUSTICE:
Proposal of a Rights Based Strategic Plan for working with the small & traditional Fisher-folk Community of Goa & Maharashtra

Research Period:

1st August to 30th November

Aim:

To generate knowledge and understanding that will contribute to the evidence base in support of advocating for Rights of fisher communities by recommending and promoting sustainable & equitable solutions for community action.
Research Objectives Included:

i. The study of the problems during the various stages of fishing, fisher community and the fishing industry.

ii. The analysis of the socio-economic discrepancies of traditional fishing and mechanised practices.

iii. The analysis of the socio-economic-cultural concerns of traditional fishermen, as well as their extended families.

iv. The determination of the environmental impacts of various practices involved with fishing livelihood.

v. The understanding of the markets and the systems in existence to determine and check fair trade practices.

vi. Proposing policy & administrative solutions through Local Self- Governing Institutions for dealing with the issues affecting the fisher communities of the Konkan Region.
Approach
The research has taken a rights-based approach premised on the perceived need for fisher communities to reclaim their stake in their livelihood options; through socio-economic-political empowerment & participatory decision making; by protecting and conserving their marine resources.

Scope and Limitations
The research attempted to fill the informational dearth on the issues faced by the fisher communities through a comprehensive analysis of policies and practices of the fishing industry vis-a-vis the holistic development of these communities. It sought to draw a trend between quality of life and the socio-economic factors around which they function. This study attempted to build a case for participatory decision making & planning to be within the purview of Local Self Governing Institutions. The research seeks to strengthen on-going grassroots and policy level campaigns on the rights of the fisher communities. Given the limited timeframe, the research was pursued in 19 coastal villages of four States in the Konkan Region (listed below). The sample chosen is believed to be representative of the entire coastal region.
Methodology

The methodology undertaken was mainly field level and desk-level research, PRAs, focus groups meetings, surveys, interviews with relevant government and Panchayat level stakeholders, local historians, academicians and geographers. The research tools was used for gathering data on coastal fishing community issues and conflicts associated with fisheries development, erosion of traditional access and systems of governance and management (See appendix 1: Research Tools).

A total of 115 respondents were pursued from all the four States for the purposes of data collection, of which approximately 50% were women engaged in this industry. Attempts were made to ensure that the sample size and composition were representative cross-section. However there were some limitations in areas where either access was denied or people were unavailable for the interviews.
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Justice for Small and Traditional Fisher Folk

Traditional occupations, in general, are taking a trouncing in virtually all spheres of economic activity. Fishing is not an exception to this rule. Today, the plight of traditional fisher folk and small fishing operators is deteriorating rapidly to a point where many of them are quitting their age-old occupation which they inherited from their fore-parents and are leaving for the gloom of metropolitan life. They emigrate hoping that there might be a better future that beckons them and that the bright city lights might also bring them brighter economic prospects.

The reality is that the grass is not greener on the other side. Worse, they find themselves living in harsh degradation mostly in the informal sectors and just about eking out a living if they can even manage it. In most cases, it is a story of rags to more rags! It gets worse. Once they have abandoned their base in the fishing villages, they cannot return because they have lost their footing and are powerless to reclaim what they have lost.

This report is a perspective setter. It provides facts and analysis of how fisher folk get pressed into the margins of economic arenas. The focus is on parts of Maharashtra and Goa. The report encapsulates the conditions of the traditional fisher folk and small fishing operators and proposes how, through bold and creative actions, a rights-based programme of intervention can be mounted.

The situation demands that the Church looks for out-of-the-box solutions, not traditional welfare and development projects. The key focus has to be about rights. Consequently, even welfare and relief must recognise a rights-based approach. The circumstances being what they are, the interventions must be multiple and incremental. The need is to empower the fisher folk through community organisation, mobilisation, wider solidarity processes and create the context among the public-media, bureaucracy, and those with the potential to contribute various degrees and aspects of expertise to the cause of advancement the status of fisher folk.

Even at this moment, we witness the escalating dispossession and displacement of small and traditional fisher folk. Big capital with a single motive “profit” has launched into fishing with mechanised trawlers and literally captured the spaces that fishing communities operated from for centuries. Reclaiming the spaces of the fisher folk, and
asserting their rights to livelihood that has been theirs from times immemorial is a task that must be pursued with vigour through lobbying and advocacy at the Governmental level. Towards that, it is also important for the initiative to have a study component which collects data about fisher folk, fishing spaces, laws of the seas and fishing, and legislation that affects and/or enhances the status of fisher folk. Such an approach which is analytical and integrated, will allow for informed action.

The Church has an obligation to intervene in solidarity with small and traditional fisher folk. It is a mission compulsion because it is about supporting the poorest of the poor – the suffering that Christ awards preferential option to. The intervention must seek to affirm justice and justice only and not bypass this hard option because the fisher folk, in their state of disempowerment and feeling of disenfranchisement, should be able to trust in and be held in support by a Church-in-mission that says boldly ‘enough is enough’.

Finally, the intervention is about restoring dignity for the fisher folk and discarding ameliorative steps that will reinforce structures of domination and injustice. In that sense, *Justice for small and traditional fisher folk* is a paradigm shift that the Church must commit to as a matter of costly solidarity – costly only because the rich and powerful will not easily hand power and rights back to those who legally and morally own them.
Tables 01 & 02: Map of the Fish landing Centres of Sindhudurg & Thane Resp.
Small & Traditional Fisher-folk Communities of Maharashtra & Goa

India’s coastal areas are home for 63 million people that constitute approximately eleven percent of the global population living in low elevation coastal areas. The seventy three coastal districts, out of a total of 593 districts, make up for 17 percentage of the national population. Nearly two hundred and fifty million people live within the fifty kilometers of the coastline. The coast also includes seven major metros like Mumbai, Chennai, Kochi and Vishakapatanam.

Konkan zone is a rugged section of western coast line of India from Thane district to Mangalore. Konkan lands between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. The Konkan division is the administrative subdivision of Maharashtra which comprises all the coastal districts. The koli community is one of the major fishing communities in the region. The Mumbai region including Thane has 241 kilometers of coastal line with eighty eight fishing villages (See Appendix II – Fisheries Profile of the State of Maharashtra). The district Sindhurdurg has 120 kilometers of coastal line with seventy one fishing villages. Goa has a coast line of 105 kilometers with 47 fishing villages (Pagdhare and Bhaka, 2012) (See Appendix III – Fisheries Profile of the State of Goa).

Defining the Essential Characteristic of the Affected Fisher Folk Community

The target group of this intervention is the fisher folk community of the konkan zone that belong mainly to the koli/ kharvi community of Maharashtra & Goa. According to Fr. Thomas Kochery, the traditional fisher folk are those men, women and children who earn their livelihood by being involved in harvesting, handling, processing and marketing of fish and fish products. The fisher folk of konkan zone are using very outdated techniques of fishing; primarily depending upon traditional techniques and the basic knowledge of the sea passed on from generation to generation. Life in the coastal villages revolves around different fishing seasons which accordingly determine their fishing and allied activities. Very often, the whole families are involved – the fishermen go out to sea to fish and when they return, their wives and children take over to sort the fish and sell the same.
The Compulsion for a New Paradigm in Addressing the Problems of Traditional Fisher-Folk

The marine and coastal environment of India plays a vital role in the nation’s economy by virtue of its resources, productive habitats and rich biodiversity. Production activities in coastal and marine areas – such as fishing (India is the 3rd largest producer of fish in the world) harbors, aquaculture, agriculture, tourism, oil and mineral exploitation – contribute about 10% of the national GDP. The fishing industry is also a major contributor to foreign exchange fetching $1.8 billion in 2006. Fishing as an Industry grew intensively post independence along the coastal waters of India and is now a major contributor to the economy. Fish production rose from 8,00,000 tones in 1950 to 4.1 million tons in the early 1990’s, employing over 14 million people.

The principal economic activity in the Konkan zone is fishing. It is known to be the richest in diversity and habitats of marine resources. Fishing and its allied activities are important sources of livelihood for those living in this region. Fish production today by traditional fishermen is usually characterised by low individual catches within a limited coastal waterline, and a high instability of income. Fishing paraphernalia have either been owned or hired by a single fisherman, or collectively. These fishing communities are easily among the poorest and most disadvantaged sector of the region. Many artisan fishermen also work in agriculture or as part-time farmers or as occasional wage-earners, compensating their family income through combined economic activities. There is also some degree of mobility of labor from fisheries to agriculture during certain seasons.

Introduction of technologically advanced vessels like trawlers and purseiniers, for commercial purposes in the last three decades has drastically affected the coastal traditional fisherman’s activity. These mechanised vessels are engaged in trawling which is ecologically hazardous, as they fish in coastal waters and have destroyed the weeding grounds of shrimps, mackerels, and other small crustacean families that cliché closely to coastal waters for

<table>
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<th>Indian Fisheries</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Global position</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Contribution of Fisheries to GDP (%)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution to Agril. GDP (%)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Per capita fish availability (Kg.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Export earnings (Rs. In Crore)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Employment in sector (million)</strong></td>
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The Deep Sea Fishing Policy of 1991

GOI decided to import 2660 factory fishing ships from outside. 25000 of such ships are idle in the World, after destroying 75% of fisheries in the World. The liberal Indian offer seems to have come at the right time for the MNCs. All the tabs have been taken off our earlier norms for joint ventures. The state has thus made the Indian EEZ one huge 'open Access regime” and the resource is up for grabs. In such a regime there are no "property rights", it is "possession" that is proof of property. This was the direct expression of Globalization in the fisheries. Economic Globalization (Capitalism) is a free movement of Capital to make Profit by a few at the expense of the vast majority who do not have the basic needs in life. There is no question of Justice, Morality and Ethics. Corruption and Price rise is part and parcel of this Globalization.
food, breeding and living in harmony. They have exploited shallow water fishing grounds where
the traditional fisherman has been fishing for generations. Paradoxically, these same trawlers
have been the prime cause of marine pollution through oil spills and wastes. Invasion of these
vehicles has led to higher ratios of traditional fisherman community pool being thrown out of
their traditional livelihood. Technology advanced trawling has not only eroded estuaries but this
encroachment has affected fish yield each year for more than a decade.

The booming beach tourism industry has caused severe ecological
damages. Beach sand extraction and coastal reclamation for the
entertainment industry have also contributed adversely to the
problems of coastal fishing activities. Silica-rich sands have been
mercilessly abused resulting in, encroachment of furious monsoon
waves into residential areas of the fishing communities, and on to
their agricultural lands and salt pans. The only means of
sustenance for the fishing community during these periodic heavy monsoons is primarily from
lakes, ponds, and khazan lands along rivers. These areas have been gradually reclaimed or
usurped for construction and industrial purposes. Besides coastal ecological erosion, damage has
also been caused by siltation from mining rejects and industrial activities are also notable.

According to a concerned Environmental Protection Agency in Goa, there is a big population of
under nourished citizens ranging from young adolescents through middle age men and women, a
majority of them being traditional fisher folk. Fish is an indispensable diet of every coastal
person. Its caloric value is excellent. Salting and drying of surplus
fish in the past has been a traditional method of marketing among
the fishing community. This not only supplemented their
transitional income but also provided them food during the lean
fishing seasons and monsoons. But with less and less fish being
caught by the traditional fishing communities, these methods are
being rapidly depleted and near extinction.

Every town has at least a single
selling outlet where the local traders
sell fish. Markets are not well
managed and have no proper storage
facilities. Middlemen often play a significant role in the sale of fish. The traditional fishermen
fall prey to these unjust practices most often given their dependence on these persons and are
susceptible to meager amounts for the catch.
In view of the growing plight of the fisher folk community & the need for concerted action from the Church with this marginalised & neglected community, the study attempted:

1. To study the problems during the various stages of fishing, fisher community and the fishing industry.
2. To analyse the socio-economic discrepancies of traditional fishing and mechanised practices.
3. To analyse the socio-economic-cultural concerns of traditional fishermen, as well as their extended families
4. To determine the environmental impacts of various practices involved with fishing livelihood
5. To understand the markets and the systems in existence to determine and check fair trade practices
6. To propose policy & administrative solutions through Local Self- Governing Institutions for dealing with the issues affecting the fisher communities of the Konkan Region

**Demographic & Geographic Sampling:**

The direct and indirect beneficiaries included fishing villages and fisher folk from the coastal areas of the Konkan Zone. Nineteen villages from Thane, Sindhurdurg and Goa were selected, which is exactly 462 kilometers of coast line. Two or three major fishing communities have been considered in view of the time and human resource constraint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Diocese</th>
<th>Diocesan Social Service Society</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Talukas</th>
<th>No. of Villages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>Centre for Social Action (CSA)</td>
<td>Thane</td>
<td>Thane</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vasai</td>
<td>Vasai Janhit Trust (VJT)</td>
<td>Thane</td>
<td>Thane</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sindhudurg</td>
<td>Sindhudurg Diocesan Development Society (SDDS)</td>
<td>Sindhudurg &amp; Ratnagiri</td>
<td>Malvan Vengurla</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>Caritas Goa</td>
<td>North Goa &amp; South Goa</td>
<td>Canacona Salcete Bardez Pernem</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
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The research project was participatory in nature. The tools for data collection were developed through various interactions with the affected communities. The research attempted to voice the concerns of the affected community in the final analysis. The main tools for the data collection were interviews, focus group discussions and mapping was partner centric and partner
participatory. This entire research study itself was a way of reaching out to the affected community to look into their concerns and welfare.

**Implementation Partners:**
The Diocesan Social Service Societies of the Konkan Zone will be the partners who will jointly implement this research study project. The Konkan Zone in the States of Maharashtra and Goa comprises of the following districts of Maharashtra - Mumbai City & Mumbai Suburban, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri & Sindhudurg and the districts of Goa state – North and South Goa. In Maharashtra, the Centre for Social Action of the Archdiocese of Bombay works in the districts of Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Raigad and four talukas of the Thane district. The Vasai Janhit Trust of the Diocese of Vasai works in ten talukas of the Thane district. The Sindhudurg Diocesan Development Society of the Diocese of Sindhudurg works in the districts of Sindhudurg & Ratnagiri and a few talukas of the Kolhapur district. In Goa, Caritas Goa and the Council for Social Justice and Peace work in the districts of North and South Goa.

The study attempted to sketch out a detailed plan of intervention and shed light on the problems that exist among the fishing communities. It identified trends which needed interventions and recommended actions accordingly. This serves as a guide book for future developmental intervention with fisher-folk. It hopes to set out a new era of protected and just use of marine resources, a greater cut down of sea water pollutions and stability of income and also enhanced skills of fishing of the affected partner.

This Micro Project attempted to bring about a defined intervention plan that will walk with the fishing community with an intention to capacitate and enhance the skills of the fisher communities of the Konkan sea coast. It looks into the aspects of identifying and addressing the deeper issues and livelihood enhancement of the affected targeted fishing communities & in identifying the much-needed multi-pronged long term strategy for addressing the issues and plight of the fishing communities of the Konkan sea coast in a protected and ecologically healthy marine environment. Such an environment would provide an opportunity for boosting the sea-based livelihood options of the poor fishing communities of this coastal region.
Declining Circumstances of the Fisher-folk Community in Sindhudurg, Mumbai, Vasai & Goa
There has been a conscious effort not to report each area individually as the patterns of displacement, dispossession & disempowerment are similar. In all the four target areas, the traditional fisher-folk communities are pushed to the margins, and hence the need was felt to draw out the larger trends and its reasons for the same. The reasoning behind some of these trends is further substantiated in the appendix IV (See Appendix IV - Globalisation & the Livelihood of Fishermen in Vasai – A Perspective in Critical Geography).

Given that majority of the fisher-folk in the coastal villages of Maharashtra & Goa depend on fishing as their only source of livelihood; the trends bring forth the growing patterns of marginalisation within this community. The study limits itself to the small & traditional fisher-folk community as they are the most affected & constitute the largest numbers along the coastline who are severely affected and their occupation faces severe threat of extinction. It is in this context and with these fisher-folk communities in mind that the following trends have been analysed and are reflected as under:

1. **Capital Infusion:** In the last decade or so fishing has and is continuing to become a capital intensive industry with mechanisation of fishing trawlers becoming increasing sophisticated resulting in the industry running on purely profit basis. Big-wigs, even outside their occupation, find it lucrative to invest in this business, thereby trampling on the traditional fisher-folk, who continue to practice fishing on a smaller & inter-generational equity basis. It is now transcending from a livelihood which created occupations to a market based industry. If the trend of capital infusion continues in the fisher-folk community then this community is under threat of extinction.

2. **Liberalisation of the Fishing Industry:** Fishing based on the ideology of capitalisation is closely linked to policies of liberalisation – World Bank favours big industry built around multi-national corporations, export industries catering to the needs of the affluent classes – mostly for the use of metropolitan cities & high end hotels & restaurants related to BIG fish; what is available in the general market area is for local consumption, while the earning capacities of the big trawlers runs into lakhs on a good day, the traditional fishermen must be content a daily average of Rs 200/ Rs 300 - it is in this context that displacement must be seen ‘phenomenon of the small versus the large’, where large is preferred subsidised & facilitated & small is discouraged and further marginalised.
3. **Traditional Fishermen versus Modernisation:** Of late traditional fishermen are in the toehold of the industry because of mechanisation. They lack access to sophisticated mechinations of the industry and hence remain at the margins of the industry, having to heavily rely on agents who sell their fish overseas or inland. The challenge is to make sure that the fishing industry is not licensed away on the basis of giving the industry to the highest bidder but being able to assert the rights of the fisher-folk to the first call.

4. **Displacement & Out-Migration:** Those who are displaced are lost in the millions of rural migrants to urban areas with only fishing as a skill – lack of adequate education, access to jobs with dignity and appropriate financial rewards (marginalisation is double). In instances where displacement is inevitable in the larger good and requires that spaces inhabited by fishing communities are taken over, Government must first evolve policies schemes and develop mechanisms for alternatives livelihoods & displacement.

5. **Sustainability & Inter-Generational Equity at Risk:** The capitalistic nature of the fishing industry typifies greed and focuses on profits. This is a sharp contrast to the ethos of traditional fisher-folk who consciously leave adequate gaps between times when they go out fishing, so that fish have time to replenish, be left to themselves and to their own life patterns. Expressing a form of spirituality which respects the integrity of all of creation. Sustainability is the key to development and the fishing industry violates sustainability. Decline in many species of fish, puts forth the question of ecological conservation and also, puts forth a case for inter-generational equity i.e. preservation of marine resources for the future generations.

Seen in this context, there is need to re-examine policy frame works that allow traditional fisher folk to reclaim their spaces and livelihoods, and to assert their Rights for protection by Government against Capitalistic Trends. The challenge before the Church and its social agencies is to initiate programmes that offer Rights based welfare, advocacy of new policy lines and the development of the fisher-folk community based on Justice for the community and eco-justice for the oceans that provide them their livelihood. *(See Appendix V – Fishing Regulations)*
6. **Susceptibility of the Small & Traditional fishermen**: The written rules and agreements on the use of the sea are violated by trawlers or the more powerful which leaves traditional fishermen with no fish or just enough for their families (See Appendix V – Regulations for fishing Vessels). Increased pauperisation and indebtedness along with a general sense of hopelessness, loss of self esteem and helplessness. The question which often arises in their mind is “what is the alternative?” Communities which have done fishing for generations don’t wish the same for their future generations cause of the insecurity of their future, hence adoption of urbanisation as an escape (This too often ends as a wrong choice as they go hoping that the grass is greener on the other side, to only realise there is no green grass). Fishing itself is a seasonal occupation; it is not all year around. It stops during monsoon/ rearing three to four months in coastal areas. That means there are just 7/8 earning months, where they have to compete with far more sophisticated forms of fishing, sooner or later they will go out of business.

7. **Denial of Social Security**: The traditional fisher-folk live a vulnerable existence as they have to cope with seasonal employment, bad weather conditions means a minimal or no catch at all and legally stipulated safety measures are not put into place. Insurance covers are unaffordable & many fisher-folk tend to by-pass these obligations by procuring false certification. Many fisher folk also see futility in obtaining insurance as they understand the uncertainties of the ocean & take necessary action. Yet when there are floods, storms, cyclones their villages are destroyed & lives are compromised/ lost.

8. **Harsh Living & Working Conditions**: Difficult economic circumstances stemming from uncertain earning capacities have resulted in multiple problems. The lack of appropriate work tools and equipment, for example, women often suffer from arthritis and joint pains as they must regularly handle ice while selling fish. Many of the fisher folk do not own means of transportation and hence must carry heavy loads of fish from the shore to the nearest market place ranging anywhere between a kilometer to 3 kilometers distance. In some situations they are able to hire rickshaws but most of the time after walking a distance of a kilometer from the shore till the road access point.

With housing conditions generally poor, a large number of the people are compelled to live in houses where sanitation is a serious
threat to health and hygiene. The lack of a proper sewage system poses serious health problems. There is generally no access to safe drinking water. Scarcity of water is frequent. Their poor economic status makes their access to adequate nutrition difficult, which in turn implies poor health circumstances. It is also not possible for them to rely on the additional means of livelihoods which would supplement their nutritional/ economic requirements because most often they did not own land to grow their own crops.

9. **The Selective & Unjust Imposition Of Coastal Regulation Zones (CRZ):** Imposition of CRZ potentially leaves entire fishing communities under threat of eviction. While CRZ came into effect in 1991, fishing communities have been natural inhabitants of coastal areas for centuries before that. They have served as custodians of coastal ecology and have displayed utmost respect for preserving and enhancing the coast by practicing due diligence over fishing practices and by respecting coastal vegetation and marine life. However, CRZ Authorities are now threatening them with measures that will compel them to move further inland which will have drastic impact on their occupation as fisher folk. It is to be noted here that subject to certain restrictions, traditional coastal communities can maintain their homes or even expand them to cope with growing needs. The threat to them is undue and based on their inability to counter the powerful Governmental machinery which is manipulated by interests who want to eject the fisher-folk.

10. **The Negative Impacts of Tourism:** The onslaught of tourism in coastal areas is prompted by the attraction of its natural beauty and pristine conditions. The calming influence of the seas draws people to coastal areas to recreate and regenerate their bodies and minds. The tourism industry has pounced on this opportunity and is establishing tourist enterprises all along the coast. In this process, they often target fisher-folk and fishing activity arguing that fishing creates an undesirable atmosphere for tourists. The whole effort is to eliminate the fisher folk by eradicating traditional fishing which happens on the coast and handing over fishing to modernise fishing techniques in which the coast does not have to receive the catch. Those who are engaged in fishing based on modern technology are mere business people and have no background in the fishing business.
11. **Poor Infrastructure & Facilities in Market Places:** The selling of fish is invariably carried out by women. Most markets do not have proper stands, counters and shelters; this means that come rain or sun the vendors will remain unprotected. Moreover these markets do not have facilities for the disposal of waste and facilities for cleaning. Water & sewage pipes are nonexistent, hygienic conditions leave much to be desired. Fishing gets revenues from Indirect taxes and the Government’s neglect of fish markets is an appalling neglect of a basic responsibility. Besides, for the growing number of vendors the market place is small & unable to accommodate all vendors at the same time. Government authorities impose an arbitrary ‘sopo’ ranging from Rs 20 to Rs 100 per day, this means that a vendor can often end up paying as much as Rs 3000 a month which dips into their already modest earnings.

12. **Middlemen and Income Leakages:** Is a source of negative influence. The lack of access to market spaces and large buyers including export markets has rendered fisher-folk dependent on the middlemen. Middlemen are not a service group but a block with self-interests and profit-motives. They exploit the fact that fisher folk lack access and therefore dictate prices at absurdly low standards. As the Government has shown little or no interest in the plight of traditional fisher-folk; and also because the fisher folk struggle has left them weakened & unorganised, there has been no real way in which the fisher-folk can eliminate the middlemen and accrue profits more in line with the quantum of labour. Logically speaking a higher yield of catch should imply higher earnings, but when the catch is larger middlemen tend to pay the fisher folk lesser than what should be due, considering that fair amount of the fish is kept in storage and exported *(See Appendix V – Export Performance Statistics).* Fisher-folk should be awarded fair prices which should commensurate with the profit middlemen make.

13. **Marginalising the Local Self Governance Institutions:** Panchayats and Municipalities are denied a role. Normally village based trades and occupations should have their licensing and support systems from Local Self Governments, this is not the case with the
fisher-folk and their occupation. The fisheries department of the State Government directly controls fishing activity in all its dimensions. For a fishing community to lobby for improved provisions means that they must have access to a State level Secretariat which is often a journey of several hundred miles of travel and one which takes them away from their everyday earnings. Local Self Governments feel their sense of helplessness to intervene in the plight of the fisher folk. They are disempowered on what should be their role to influence policy and implement it. It is an obvious failure that the Government has not decentralised the powers, the policy of ‘subsidiarity’ must apply (decision making happening as close to the action as possible).

14. Money Lending vis a vis Indebtedness: Falling economic standards have resulted in fisher-folk resorting to borrowing from money lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates (18% - 30% per month i.e. 200 -400 % p.a). Repayments become next to impossible because earnings do match the growth of interests. Growing indebtedness means that fisher-folk sell off their fishing goods. Seen in the context of massive farmers suicides in the Country, this is a trend that needs to be monitored and steps need to be taken to reverse patterns of indebtedness including immediate relief for those who are indebted.

15. Depleting Fish Catch as linked to Ecological Degradation: Big trawlers fish indiscriminately with total disregard for marine life and its preservation and for sustainability in general. Traditional fisher-folk who are unable to go deep-sea often come back with a marginal catch. The importance of ecological sustainability as well as retention of livelihood options for the small business is an aspect that is neglected which is causing more and more suffering for the fisher-folk.

16. Indiscriminate Infrastructure Constructions: There has been a tendency on the part of the Government and semi-govt agencies to take unilateral decisions about infrastructural projects on the Coast. These include roads and entertainment spaces which have effectively cut fisher-folk from access to the coast to their markets spaces and vice versa. The imposition of such enterprises has also resulted in a situation where the fisher-folk can no longer dock their fishing boats. The tourist industry does not want to see fishing boats and nets lying around the beaches claiming that this interferes with the picturesque of the coast line. The issue at stake is not always the project itself but the fact that it is often counter-productive to local communities and benefits a small minority of pleasure seekers.
17. **The Collapse of Co-Operatives**: As in most other cases, co-operatives have failed to provide the relief that people could have gained from it and the empowerment co-operatives could have provided.

The decline is visible in all facets of the fishing community’s life – include the social, economic, cultural & political
Proposed Interventions & Strategy for Action

For the Churches past methods of working must be abandoned. A paradigm shift is an urgent necessity and this paradigm shift must have the following elements:

1. It must be Rights Based
2. It must be Developmental Oriented
3. It should be geared towards peoples empowerment and re-enfranchised
4. It should conclude in the prevalence of justice

The essential strategy should be as follows:

a. Participatory planning for community enhancement.
b. Conscientising and community mobilisation through peoples based institutions such as multipurpose co-operatives and social enterprises.
c. Advocacy & lobbying
d. Working to create alternative & pro-people policies
e. Creating an alliance in the form of a non party political formation that will make the effort feasible.

All this presupposes an important paradigm shift and the bottom line is about building just and equitable relationships between the fisher-folk and the wider community. The Church must accept to submerge its identity within the struggles of the people so that it functions as the proverbial salt of the earth.

The strategic plan contains multiple issues but they should not be seen in isolation. The linking factors would be the Rights and Justice oriented nature of the programmes and interventions. Hence the various part of the plan must be seen as integrated in their nature and scope.

All the below stated interventions should consider the following strategies, which would need to be adapted as seen most appropriate. A detailed description of each proposal is given below the chart which states what should be done and the best method for the same. The list is extensive; hence the Organisations in-charge would need to sit together and work out a detailed implementation plan based on this study.

a. Offering immediate welfare/ relief to the community.
b. Transcending from welfare to community development using community organisation techniques
c. Creating & Promoting alternative policies & practices
d. Advocacy and Lobbying
e. To develop a participatory approach in which people set a criteria for borrowing & repayment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Description of Issues</th>
<th>Nature of Intervention</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
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</table>
| 1      | Declining Livelihood Options     | 1. Enhancing economic prospects | 1. Developing Multipurpose Co-operative Associations (MCAs):  
Savings / Credit Co-operatives;  
Marketing Co-operatives/ outlets;  
Transport co-operatives; food banks; |
|        |                                  | 2. Claiming the Right to Livelihood | 2. Creating a Social Enterprise with Social Dimensions: Using specialized, qualified, skilled & trained expertise |
| 2      | Access to Government schemes     | Insisting on political Obligations | 1. Existing schemes of fisheries departments  
2. Social welfare department schemes  
3. Women and Child Welfare  
4. Ramponkar Schemes  
5. Housing Ministry |
| 3      | Health & Hygiene & Sanitation    | Facilitating better health & hygiene standards | 1. Low cost nutrition training  
2. Collective vegetable gardening  
3. Preventive medicines –medical camps and check ups  
4. Sanitation - toilets, drainage systems |
<p>| 4      | Education                        | 1. Increasing the skills of the community | 1. Create a pool of qualified professionals of a multi-disciplinary nature for the Community Social Enterprise |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2. Affirming the need for decentralised decision making</th>
<th>2. Ensure compulsory education in accordance with RTE</th>
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<td>3. Vocational Training Institutes that pre-empt migration to metros (job-oriented for the social enterprise)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Debt Eradication</td>
<td>1. Facilitate short term processes for reducing indebtedness</td>
<td>1. Create a Revolving Fund to ease burdens of indebtedness through easy credit access on undemanding terms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Providing economically viable alternatives</td>
<td>2. Enhance earning opportunities that liberate people from single occupation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Policy Framework &amp; Alliance Building</td>
<td>Promoting well researched and participatory policies which ensure protection of the small &amp; traditional fisher-folk</td>
<td>Review existing policy and practice at governmental level and propose new ones and ensure relevant mechanisms to ensure implementation under a “Peoples Audit process”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Panchayat</td>
<td>Advocate for decentralisation of powers to the Constitutionally mandated Local Authorities</td>
<td>Lobby for effective monitoring of fisheries policies at Panchayat level so that Gram Sabhas and the Panchayat become better placed to decide and act in favour of fisher folk interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Infrastructure (MPLADS)</td>
<td>Advocate for infrastructure schemes to upgrade fishing related infrastructure such as market places, landing centres, access to roadways.</td>
<td>Lobby with the Member of Parliament of the areas(s) to provide for basic infrastructure needs that will enhance economic opportunities and avoid displacement by mega-projects in the areas that are counter to peoples development</td>
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</table>
1. **Declining Livelihood Options:**

   a. **Enhancing Economic Prospects:** This should happen in an incremental effort beginning with the creation of well planned Multi-purpose Co-operative Associations (MCA). An MCA should include components such as Savings/Credit Co-operatives; Market co-operatives/outlets; Transport co-operatives; and food banks. The co-operative scheme should be accompanied by substantive mobilisation, education and awareness, skill training in managing co-operatives and the inculcation of disciplined communitarian functioning. Decentralisation and co-operation must be key dimensions. Linkages to expert bodies (not Government) that can enable the setting up and operationalising of the co-operatives must be ensured.

   b. **Claiming the Right to livelihood:** The conditions of fisher-folk directly and indirectly violate the Right to Livelihood. The mediatory bodies (Church) should organise the people to resist Government policies/practices, business practices, through non-violent but strong opposition. The Right to Livelihood should not be enforced through charity but by claiming relevant schemes from the Government that give people jobs that guarantee their sustainability. Discarding charity is important because the claim to livelihood Rights is about advancing dignity.

   c. **Social Enterprise:** As a long term goal, the various villages (all villages) under the purview of the Centres should be linked in an effective social – business enterprise of the fisher-folk. The Enterprise will have facets that include enhanced financial earnings that are built on a business model but with a social orientation, and built on values of equitability and fair trade practices.

   The enterprise will mobilise the entire fishing community and also pick people from within the community to manage the complexities of a major business operation. The Church will require to motivate and to recruit socially-oriented management graduates from Church related institutions who will pledge 5-7 years of their time to develop the Social Enterprise as a viable business model. The profits from such an enterprise will not be handed to individuals, but the largest possible numbers of individual fisher-folk especially from the small sectors will be drawn in as stake/shareholders, so that the profits are equally distributed. The notion of a social enterprise needs to be carefully planned and developed in a series of working meetings, and the planning process alone should have an investment of twelve months.
2. Access to Government Schemes

a. Existing Schemes of Fisheries Departments: The fisheries department, at the Centre and States, has drawn up useful schemes that can be accessed by small and traditional fisher-folk. These schemes have remained unavailable to the fish-folk largely because they remain under-advertised; often funds allocated to such schemes remains under-utilised and eventually returned back to the Government coffers. The Church must mediate between communities and the Government to create working dialogues that foster Government – people’s partnerships, so that the schemes reach the people they are drawn in favour of. The first task is for the Church to draw up an inventory of existing schemes and plans of both the Central and State Governments; then strategise for dialogue and means of access. The channel for such schemes to reach the people will be the MCAs; eventually the social enterprise will be the manager and mobilisor of these resources.

b. Social Welfare Department Schemes: Under the Ministry of Social welfare at the Centre and in States, there exist multiple schemes that target the rural poor that include the fisher-folk community. Social welfare schemes are necessary given to organised and registered bodies. In some cases they also apply to individuals such as disabled and elderly people. As a working strategy, a social welfare officer should liaison with the Centre and State Governments to know about the schemes and develop means and ways to ensure the schemes reach the traditional fishing communities. Eventually the Church should organise local communities into registered societies who can then independently claim the schemes. All these schemes that are accessed should be brought at community level and not built around institutions created by the Church. The elderly and disabled may be the first focal points of welfare schemes from the Centre and States.

c. Women and Child Welfare Schemes: Women are in many ways the backbone of fishing. It is they who take the fish to the markets and convert fishing into an economic activity. Yet they have few privileges and facilities that recognise their labour and effort into the local economy. The impact of women working in fishing has its indirect spill over on children. They often face neglect because they are often left under the care of older siblings. The focal point of schemes to be accessed could be with regard to child-care programmes that provide respite to mothers who go to the market to sell their fish through anganwadis and balwadis.

d. Housing Ministry Schemes: Ministry of Housing always implements schemes of subsidised housing for the rural poor. Many of these include grants for renovation of existing homes. It would be necessary to identify these schemes and work on a uniform programme on a village to village basis to upgrade homes/ houses taking
into account various factors such as space, ventilation, toilets, water & possible space for community kitchen gardens.

e. **Ramponkar Schemes:** Perhaps the maximum decline in the fortunes of fisher-folk are those that affect the ramponkars. Being still in the most traditional sector they are pushed around by the tourism industry in the main. There requires to be a Rights based welfare intervention in which their existing spaces are secured and lost spaces are reclaimed. In addition, the Church should identify specific schemes that target ramponkars and mediate the implementation of schemes. This particular intervention requires that a database of existing ramponkars is created along with those who have left the trade and want to come back.

f. **SC/ST/OBC Schemes:** Majority of the fisher-folk community being listed under the SC/ST/ OBC can avail schemes directly meant for their upliftment/ education and well-being of the community. The Church should identify these schemes in relation to the various aspects of the communities’ requirement and ensure the implementation of the same through the Local Bodies. *(See Appendix VII – Declaration of Koli/ Kharvi as OBC)*

3. **Health and Hygiene**

   a. **Low Cost Nutrition Training:**

      i. The Church should work with the people to co-operate with Central and State based nutrition institutes which provide training in low cost nutrition to people. This should include identifying categories of foods that can be cooked using pulses, nuts, vegetables and jaggery. This will help enhance nutritional standards for children in particular.

      ii. Similarly, goat rearing can be encouraged through schemes in which people receive Goats as a loan and when the goats reproduce are asked to replace them with the first litter. (Goats milk is known to be of high nutritive value).

   b. **Collective Vegetable Gardening:** In the same way the community should be supported to carry out vegetable gardening on a co-operative basis:

      i. Preventive medicines, medical camps and check-ups: The church should work with Government and private doctors periodically as a preventive medical approach. In addition to these camps, these should be looked at platforms to create higher levels of awareness about hygiene.
c. **Advocate for Clean Water & Sanitation**: The Church should mediate with relevant Government departments to bring in clean drinking water and drainage systems.

4. **Education**
   a. **Create a Pool of Qualified Professionals of a Multi-Disciplinary Nature for the Community Social Enterprise**: The communities should develop a comprehensive and deliberate strategy of encouraging selected people from the community to qualify for professional degrees that will equip them to manage and operate the social enterprise.

   b. **Vocational Training Institutes that Pre-empt Migration to Metros (job-oriented for the social enterprise)**: Vocational training institutes should be established that lead to self employment so that even if they immigrate to metros they are not any more unskilled labour or they can move into the category of self-employed individuals in time.

   c. **Implement Right to Education**: Ensure compulsory education in accordance with Right to Education.

5. **Debt Eradication**
   a. **Create a Revolving Fund to Ease Burdens of Indebtedness through Easy Credit Access on Undemanding Terms**: Since many fisher-folk are indebted & this indebtedness is growing, a revolving fund should be created which is linked to the savings co-operative which provides easy credit access & can lift the burden of debt in a phased manner.

   b. **Enhance Earning Opportunities that Liberate people from Single Occupation**: Debt eradication can be carried through providing people with additional vocational skills to embark upon in off-season months and as a leisure time productivity programme e.g. handicraft/ crochet etc.

6. **Policy Frameworks & Alliance Building**
   a. **Review Existing Policy and Practice at the Governmental Level**: Review and propose new ones and ensure relevant mechanisms to ensure implementation under a “Peoples Audit process”. The fisher folk people should be facilitated to create alliances with the broader fisher–folk movements. Through this they should be enabled to review and propose fisheries policies that benefit the fishing community.
b. **Review of the Fishing Ban Period:** An immediate policy/practice that should be implemented to the review of the period of the fishing ban to make it uniform for Maharashtra and Goa (*See Appendix VIII – Ban Period*)

c. **Sustainable Environmental Practices:** Choice of an intermediate technology like outboard motors which are cheaper than trawlers and purseiners and highly fuel efficient will go a long way in the preservation of the coastal marine ecology as well as prevent the displacement of the existing traditional labour force.

7. **Strengthening Local Self-Governing Institutions**
   Lobby for effective monitoring of the fisheries policies at the Panchayat/ Municipality level so that Gram Sabhas/ Municipal Wards and the Panchayat/ Municipality become better placed to decide and act in favour of fisher-folk interests. Panchayat Members must be unified to claim the Right to implement fisheries policies and programmes at Panchayat level. This would also serve to empower Gram Sabhas and make Panchayat a location for Government accountability to the people on the welfare of fisher-folk.

8. **Infrastructure (MPLADS)**
   Lobby with the Member of Parliament of the areas(s) to provide for basic infrastructure needs: Lobbying for MPLAD schemes – each village, functioning under the co-ordination of the Church, should identify & agree on infrastructure needs that will enhance economic opportunities and avoid displacement by mega-projects in the areas that are counter to people’s development. The local Member of Parliament should be lobbied with to provide for the requirement under the MPLAD scheme.
Concept Paper on Social Enterprise(s) among Fishing Communities (SEFC) in Maharashtra & Goa

Purpose and Strategies

The situation of fisher folk, especially from the traditional and small sectors, demands out-of-the-box solutions that can offer the community avenues for development with dignity and justice. The urgency for such solutions is clear when one considers the acutely difficult economic circumstances that the fisher folk face. The need for innovative alternatives is also clear when seen from the perspective that the traditional and small fisher folk are being pushed to the margins and often being displaced by the more powerful and capital intensive/technology backed fishing sectors.

Social Enterprise(s) that combine aspects of commercial operations and social consciousness are proposed as a strategy that must be explored. Social Enterprises among fishing communities in Maharashtra and Goa could well serve to evolve as an organisation that applies commercial strategies to maximise improvements in human and environmental well-being, rather than maximising profits for external shareholders whose sole motive for investing in an enterprise is profit. Social enterprises can, therefore, be structured as a for-profit or non-profit, or both. The base for establishing a social enterprise in the target areas could be existing co-operative, self-help organisations, and the social movement which serves the people. Most importantly, it will contribute to the role of the social economy by enforcing inclusion in society and incorporating into the social development processes the most marginalised sections of society.

The SEFC will not set out to offer any benefit to investors, but will advance to that stage when they view themselves being at that stage when they are able to further their capacity to realise their social and environmental goals. SEFC will be an instrument of doing development by carrying out doing trade and will shun any notion of charity. The essential emphasis will be on community organising, democratic control of capital and mutual principles. As a business based on social purpose and social, it will generate funds for development projects and, thus, advance self-reliance and dignity.

The SEFC will engage in commercial activity and ensure that the profits accrue in community benefit by reinvesting surpluses to achieving a wider social or community objective either in their members' or a wider interest.

Towards the above SEFCs will engage in multiple and linked entrepreneurial initiatives:
a) Continuous activity of producing goods and/or selling services.

b) High degree of autonomy – delegated to local communities even while operating centrally.

Social dimension of the SEFC

a) Members will exercise decision-making power not based on capital ownership
b) A participatory nature, which involves the persons affected by the activity each according to their skills and capacities.
c) Limited profit distribution that is linked to the explicit aim to benefit the community.

The SEFCs could be registered as a business establishment or as a form of social co-operatives, associations, voluntary organisations.

SEFCs can diversify their activities to include:
- Training and integration of unemployed persons.
- Personal services (e.g. childcare services, services for elderly people)
- Local development of disadvantaged areas
APPENDIX