

## A Proactive Village – In Support of Aquaculture for Poor and Scheduled Caste Groups (Jharkhand)

### **Principal Investigator**

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A film documentary of this Case Study is included on the Project CD-ROM. The English version of the documentary's Hindi script appears on the following pages along with still photographs from the film.

### **Origin**

This Case Study from Jharkhand was proposed by Ashish Kumar, in association with Dr K P Singh, Field Specialist Aquaculture, GVT, Ranchi, Jharkhand, William Savage and Graham Haylor.

### **Duration**

The Case Study began in September following its setting up in August 2002. The fieldwork ran through February 2003, with opportunities to report progress and get feedback on two occasions: the State-level Workshop in October 2002 and the Stakeholders Workshop in January 2003. Final presentation of the Case Study was made at the Policy Review Workshop in Noida, Delhi, in April 2003.

### **Location**

The Case Study location was Fulwar Toli Village, Bundu Block, Ranchi District, where government support to fishermen has been available from the Fisheries Department.

### **Key Informants**

Key informants included Mr Bhim Nayak and fellow fishers of Fulwar Toli, and the officer of the Bundu “notified area” office.

### **Method**

The Case Study methods were individual interviews and small-group discussions, around issues raised by villagers about how government policies are impacting on their livelihoods. As Principal Investigator, Ashish Kumar took charge of organizing and documenting the fieldwork. A professional documentary film-maker from the ETV channel worked Mr Kumar on the storyboard for the documentary, using information from the interviews and discussions, which was fully drafted for comment and recommendations at the October 2002 workshop, supported by photographs. Following the workshop and amendments to the storyboard, the film crew commenced on-location filming and editing to produce a version in time for the January 2003 Stakeholders Workshop. Final editing and production of the film documentary followed.

## **Content**

The Case Study film documentary includes footage and commentary to help policy-makers understand:

- The level of development of the livelihoods of the fishing community in Bundu (including their experience of different government schemes)
- Their inclusion and exclusion from government schemes (and reasons), including:
  - Process for the selection of beneficiaries, including key actors from DOF and the Block Development Office
  - Mechanism for provision of loans
  - Process for supply of material inputs
  - Mechanism for provision of training
  - Process for communicating (about government schemes and technical extension messages, any systems for feedback, cross-checking and streamlining the system)
  - Marketing support, networking and strategies and the role for farmers, the DOF and banks in decision-making

## Film Documentary Script



The Fulwar Toli Village of Bundu Block of Ranchi District is waiting for a package of government schemes. Known as the village of a fishermen's community, the livelihood is today more from daily wage-earning than from the fishing and fishery business. Even 85 out of a total of 115 families are totally dependent on daily wages. Full of natural resources, the village and the fishermen need a guide, philosopher and friend.



Basically, the fishermen do not know anything about the government's encouragement and government's schemes. Due to lack of good education, they do not know whom to meet and where to contact for availing of the facilities of government schemes. This is the reason that they have almost totally diverted from their traditional occupation and opted for piggery, poultry, tanning of hides, drum beating on occasions like marriages, and rickshaw-pulling to earn their livelihoods.



Fisherman: *If I do fishing, then I can't sustain my family, The larger pond is full of weeds and due to excess dirt, all the fish have died ... I am a specialist in fishing ... I can catch any type of fish ... but due to lack of fish ... I pull a rickshaw in the morning.*

Some years back, government officials convinced them about a better future. Even the Scheduled Caste Development Corporation sanctioned loans to them for some activities but, except for the band party business, nothing succeeded. Later some other works were also done. The Department of Fisheries provided 50 brick houses to the fishermen.



Kartik Machhua: *So far Department of Fisheries of the government has given me a house, which I have constructed and when officials come, I show them.*

Some tube wells have also been constructed to provide them with fresh drinking water but because Bundu has been declared as a "notified area", the fishermen have been deprived of so many development schemes.



Bhim Nayak: *Because we live here we are deprived of so many schemes ... which are available to Gram Panchayats ... like IRDP, NREP and Indira Awas (Housing), and our development has stopped.*

It has directly affected their occupation and life standard. Now, no one takes care of them. Even their children are deprived of good education.



Bhim Nayak: *No unemployment allowances ... nothing ... And recently under the income generation scheme ... we have been deprived of the buses distributed to our scheduled tribe brethren by the government ... this is very humiliating.*

Even in most of the other departments of the government, there are limited schemes for these fishermen belonging to scheduled castes. This may be a reason that there is a clear lack of infrastructure for their traditional occupation. There is not even provision for fish culture or a suitable market for selling fish for these people. Often they have to sell fish on the roadside.



Fisherwoman: *We don't get markets ... we sell on the road ... when vehicles come, we have to shift ... we need another place ... if we get a market, it will be better ... then we'll not have to shift.*

Due to a shortage of ice and high bus fares, it becomes difficult for them to go to Ranchi. In addition to that, they take loans on higher rates from the local moneylenders, the repaying of which becomes difficult for them.



In spite of that, they are happy that the Department of Fisheries has been cooperative to them. The officials of the department regularly visit them and keep them informed about the schemes. One Bhim Nayak of this village is a member of the managing committee of the Fish Farmers Development Agency and attends meetings presided over by the Deputy Commissioner at Ranchi and puts before the officers their grievances.



Bhim Nayak has been the main person who brings the problems of these fishermen to the notice of the authorities. Bhim tries to settle the problems of the villagers at his level only. For the fishermen children he runs a school without any fees.

Bhim Nayak: *I don't receive any type of aid from government or non-government organizations ... I feel it necessary and voluntarily I am spreading it in my community.*



Today Bhim Nayak is an inspiration for the younger people of his village and is working as a link between the fishermen and the government.

In spite of all this people of fulwartoli are happy that DoF officials visit



The efforts of Bhim Nayak are bringing success. But still, the fishermen feel that there is a lack of the basic infrastructure for their occupation. They have never received any material for aquaculture. About a decade ago, the Department of Fisheries had supplied nets to the fishermen, which have been completely destroyed now. They have also got training long back but today there is no trace of government schemes here. The main tank of this village is being polluted due to lack of maintenance.



In spite of that, the fishermen of Fulwar Toli are quite hopeful. This is the reason that they often sit together and discuss their problems. Their main demands are:

1. The fishermen should be provided with the legal settlement papers of the land on which they are living.
2. The scheduled caste people should also be included in the income-generating schemes.
3. There should be a proper market for selling fish.
4. Soft loans should be provided to them.
5. Insulated boxes and ice should be provided.
6. Fishermen of the “notified area” committee should be included in rural development programs.



However, the fishermen are still hopeful. They need a complete package, and then only real development can be expected in all the households of Fulwar Toli.