

# At ease with the sea

Fishermen no longer depend on traditional wisdom before venturing to sea

## A boon to fishermen

Fishermen no longer hesitate to venture into the sea and no more depend on traditional wisdom such as looking for congregation of birds, colour and smell of the sea etc. Thanks to the advisories that Incois provides through electronic display boards, fisher-

times and two to three times increase in profit. More importantly, fishermen have been greatly benefitted in search time which is up to 30-70 per cent."

Ironical though it may seem the Tsunami centre, situated in the Deccan plateau and far away from the coast, is indeed a lifeline not only to fisherman

■ A total of hundred electronic boards are installed in various harbours across the nation providing advisories to fisherman.

■ Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories were disseminated in eight Indian coastal languages as well as in English and Hindi to 136 nodes spread along the coast of India.

■ PFZ advisories are particularly beneficial to artisanal, motorised and small mechanised sector fishermen engaged in pelagic fishing with ring seining, gill netting, etc. On an average, the success rate of PFZ advisories varied between 70 to 80%.

■ To educate the fishermen on how to use the PFZ advisories and get benefited, 105 workshops/ awareness campaigns were conducted at various fishing villages.

■ The National Tsunami Early Warning Centre (NTEWC) operated on 24x7 basis. It detected and reported 165 major earth quakes during April 2009 – March 2010.



Electronic display board

## T P VENU

“A few thousand earthquakes of less than three magnitudes happen every month across the globe. Only a few of the magnitude of 9 plus can trigger a Tsunami,” says Dr T Srinivas Kumar, nonchalantly at the Tsunami Early Warning Centre of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) in Hyderabad. Fresh from the success that the centre achieved by conducting a mock drill by re-enacting the events of 26 December 2004, that wrecked havoc and caused great loss to life and property to the Indian Ocean region.

He says that it was a huge success and catapulted INCOIS to be a leader in dissemination of Tsunami bulletins. Till recently the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) and Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) provided Tsunami bulletins to the

Indian Ocean countries. Starting from October 12, 2011, the Tsunami warning centre at Hyderabad along with other Regional Tsunami Advisory service Providers of the region namely Australia & Indonesia, will take over the responsibility of providing tsunami bulletins to Indian Ocean member countries.

When asked how the Tsunami was re-enacted he said that the event could be planted in the computer with magnitude, latitude, longitude and depth. The aim was to check the systems operational capacity and efficiency of communications in the wake of an emergency. It indeed was a huge success as Tsunami bulletins were generated within 10 minutes and a total of 15 bulletins in a day were generated.

Also as part of the mock drill, people in vulnerable locations such as Pillaichavadi in Puducherry and four coastal villages in Maharashtra were evacuated.



Dr T Srinivas Kumar, Scientist and Head ASG, In-charge, National Early Warning Centre.

men are given advice in vernacular language not only when it is safe to go for fishing but also the location where schools of fish will be available. Dr Srinivas says, “There are more than 60,000 users of the service and there has been an increase in catch to the tune of more than four

**FROM SENDING ALERTS ON EARTHQUAKES TO PROVIDING INFORMATION TO FISHERMEN, INCOIS IS THE LIFELINE TO THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE ON THE COAST AND TO THE COUNTRIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION.**

but to the shipping, fishing, offshore industries, ports and harbours as well as for navy and Coast Guard.

Dr N C Anil Kumar, Scientist, Kerala State Remote Sensing and Environment Centre sums up the work by Incois beautifully, “The warning system has come as a wel-

come relief to the fishing community in Kerala. The benefits are already visible with improved fish catch and the quality of life of fishermen rising by many notches.”



Scientists at the Tsunami Early Warning Centre (Photos: Abbas)