

FISHERMEN'S LIVES MADE EASIER THROUGH TECH

By Deepthi Sanjiv, Bangalore Mirror Bureau | Jan 5, 2016, 04.00 AM IST



Integrated dissemination system for all ocean-related activities soon will fetch them higher profits, says scientist

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad is developing an integrated dissemination system for all ocean-related activities for fishermen. Dr Nagaraja Kumar, Scientist-D and in-charge, Marine Fishery Advisory Services, INCOIS, Hyderabad, said, "In a year's time, the service should be ready. A fisherman need not

have an Android phone to get these services. This is an attempt to reach out to fishermen in a single centralised manner. This would include multilingual SMS, audio call (language preference) SMS, fax, email, social media, electronic media, global telecommunication satellite services, cloud channels, electronic display boards and website. INCOIS will be integrating this into a single solution that will directly reach the fisherman."

Kumar was speaking on the sidelines of a national workshop on "Application of Space Technology in Fisheries" organised by the department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on Monday. Using space technology increases profit and helps identify potential fishing zones and thus reduces consumption of fuel by 30-70 per cent, he said.

Electronic display boards

Kumar said that there are 1,500 fish landing centres that include fishing harbours in India. The department will install an addition of 100 electronic display boards that will give information on ocean state forecast, tsunamis and high wave alerts. These 100 boards would be developed with satellite communication and solar panels. Since the existing 100 boards have high power consumption, fishermen tend to switch it off. In a year's time, the boards are expected to be installed.

Mobile app

The MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, with the support of Qualcomm and INCOIS, has developed an Android based app for fishermen. Kumar said that Fisher Friend app that was released in 2014 provides potential fishing zone information, ocean state forecast, high wave alerts, cyclone, tsunami alerts, market information, government schemes, international boundary crossing alerts and a few important mobile numbers to communicate. The app has been launched in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. "By the next month, the app will be made available across India. INCOIS reaches out to nearly one lakh fishermen of which nearly 6,000 are using this mobile application."

Nancy J Anabel, Director, Information, Education and Communication, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation said, "Every location will have a special feature. For instance, Odisha has a turtle estuary, which would be mapped. By the next month, all the common features would be ready. The app is in the process of being scaled up and will be provided in all local languages. By October, the app would be available in 10 additional languages." So far there have been 5,800 downloads, but the page views have been over 3 lakh for potential fishing zones, disaster alert and ocean state forecast.

The other technologies available are the INCOIS app, PFZ (Potential Fishing Zone app and M Krishi Fishers.

Biometric cards

The main objective of the two-day workshop is to explore the possibility of adaptations by various stake holders. It is proposed to develop an action plan to adopt space technology for the benefit of fishermen. Space technology is useful especially for identification of potential fishing zones in the sea, accurate weather forecast for fishermen and measurement of aquatic resources for fish culture. With the adoption of these technologies, the operational cost of the fishing boats is expected to be reduced, resulting in higher profit for the fishermen. Speaking at the inaugural of the workshop, Ashok Kumar Angurana, Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, said out of the 21 lakh marine fishers, biometric data has been collected for 16 lakh and cards have been issued for 14 lakh.

More KSFDC outlets

Karnataka State Fisheries Development Corporation has decided to roll out more outlets and canteen across all districts. Dr N S Chennappa Gowda, secretary, department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, said KFDC hopes to increase number of canteens.

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