

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

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Community-based management is the central element in any development effort. The important elements in community-based management are people with common interests, resources and a local system of management. Women being the consumers, exploiters and managers of natural resources have great influence on the development of natural resources and on equipping the future generations for a better living.

Though the concept of community-based coastal zone management is well known, the methods of its application have been varying. There are problems which coastal communities have to confront at a more universal and more acute level such as scarcity of drinking water and fuel, low productivity of the coastal land, marginalisation from traditional occupations, particularly, in the case of women, degradation of coastal environment, drudgery, malnutrition and socio-economic backwardness.

There have been a number of programmes and schemes for development of communities and the coastal zone, including infrastructure, equipment and training from government and other agencies directed at improving livelihoods. However, micro level efforts are required to develop models for addressing the problem in a holistic manner.

The paper reports the procedure of action-oriented micro-level research aimed at understanding the issues in coastal zone management and planning and implementing suitable interventions with the specific involvement of women. Coastal zone management is a complex task requiring multi-disciplinary inputs and the study focused on influencing the habits and attitudes of the community. Interventions in specific spheres such as responsible fisheries, natural resources and sea-erosion, sustainable aquaculture/agriculture, drinking water and sanitation, waste disposal and alternative livelihoods were planned and implemented involving research-extension-community-governance participation. The action research helped people identify their needs, problems, goals and aspirations, and suggest solutions for their well-being, provided an opportunity for equal participation by men and women and encouraging women's participation in finalizing the coastal zone management plan. The factors that led to the success and failure of the interventions are also discussed. Given that the conditions prevailing across the coastal regions are quite similar, the approach could be very well be replicated in other coastal locations.