

participants from state and central government agencies. Among the organisations, representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, state forest departments, National Highway Development Authority, New Delhi, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation, APMDC, Hyderabad, the Integrated Coastal and Marine Area Management, Chennai, Indian Navy and Coast Guard, National Institute of Oceanography, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Central Institute of Fisheries Technology and NGOs shared their views on eco-friendly coastal development with reference to sea turtle conservation and management. A field visit to Rushikonda sea turtle nesting beach was organised

to assess the impact of developmental activities along the coast of Visakhapatnam city and similar activities that are undertaken in various important beaches of India. Based on the interactions during the workshop, a sustainable eco-friendly coastal development plan with respect to conservation and management of sea turtles and their nesting habitat along the coast of India was mooted, the details of which are to be published in the form of a manual. B. C. Choudhury, Nodal Officer, GOI-UNDP Sea Turtle Project, coordinated the workshop.

*Source: GOI-UNDP Sea Turtle Project, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun (undpturtle@wii.gov.in)*

### **Workshop-cum-Demonstration on Turtle Excluder Device for trawl owners and operators of the Orissa coast, February 2002**

A four-day participatory programme of 'Workshop-cum-Demonstration on Turtle Excluder Device for the Trawl owners and Operators of Orissa coast' was held at Paradip from 9th to 12th February 2002 under the joint aegis of Directorate of Fisheries, Government of Orissa and Project Swarajya, an NGO based at Cuttack. Inaugurated by S.K. Mohapatra, Chairman Paradip Port Trust at Employees Recreation Centre, it was attended by A.K. Tripathy, Commissioner – cum – Secretary Department of Fisheries and Animal Resources Development, S. Sahu Director Fisheries, A.P. Tripathy Chief Wildlife Warden, A. Behera, Managing Director of Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority and Special Relief Commissioner, M. Praharaj, Inspector General of Orissa Police and C. Hari Das, Assistant Commissioner of Fisheries Government of India. The essence of their talks was an appeal to the trawl owners and operators to examine the suitability of the proposed TED from the point of view of both its impact on their fish catch and its efficacy for safeguarding the endangered turtles. C.R. Behera Advisor to Project Swarajya, a Co-convenor of the programme coordinated the event in collaboration with the Fisheries personnel. Dr. C.S. Kar, Wildlife Research Officer of Government of Orissa and Dr. B. Pandav, Wildlife Institute of India served as resource persons of the programme, responding to and interacting with the trawl owners and other participants on the biology of sea turtles.

About 60 representatives of various trawler associations from Dhamra, Paradip and other fishing bases of the state came together under the banner of 'All Orissa Coordination Committee of Trawler Owners' and took an active part in the programme. They were vociferous about their interests and at one point staged a demonstration outside the meeting hall to express their resentment against an allegedly exaggerated and false media report having negative implications for the trawling industry. Leaders of trawl owners, T.K. Pattnaik, K. Rath, K.N. Praharaj and D.K. Sahu not only delivered long and fiery speeches, but also forcefully intervened on several occasions to press for the attention of the audiences to their 'hitherto ignored' points of view. Moreover, on the concluding day, a 9 point memorandum was circulated by their Committee, in which the existing model of CIFT-TED was squarely jettisoned on the apprehension that it would reduce their fish catch by 50%. The same memorandum pleaded that any alternative device that CIFT might design in future would be acceptable to them only if it would cause no loss to the fish catch while saving turtles, and only after a year of test and trial of the viability of the new device. Further the memorandum underlined the willingness of the trawl owners to close down their industry for a period of 3 months during turtle breeding along the Orissa coast to avoid trawling related turtle deaths, provided they are paid compensation for the period of closure. The memorandum called for amendment to all laws that

prohibit an extensive 20 km seaward area from fishing activities, since the turtle congregation takes place only within 3 to 4 km of shallow waters off the coastline. The memorandum while deploring the wastage of huge chunks of UNDP and Government money after counter-productive measures in the name of turtle conservation, strongly appealed to all concerned authorities to earmark a part of this money for paying allowances to the trawling crews and fishermen, who are willing to carry out all difficult and painstaking programmes for turtle protection at field level.

The second day of the workshop was devoted to hands-on lessons in net preparation, TED fabrication and installation in the premises of New Fishing Harbour, under the guidance of the scientists of Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi, State Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kakinada, Fishery Survey of India, Central Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering & Technology. On the third day a comparative demonstration of fishing trawlers with and without attachment of TED and also with and without the attachment of the second cod end was held by four trawlers at a depth of around 16 fathoms, about 10 to 12 km off the coastline, in the presence of the scientists, trawl owners, NGOs, media men and Government officials.

On the concluding day, both Government personnel including the scientists and the trawler leaders presented their respective views and interpretations on the results of TED demonstration, which were found to be widely divergent. On the basis of the deliberations so made, a 10 point Resolution was proposed by the President of the Valedictory session T.K. Behera, Joint Director of Fisheries, Orissa, which was subject to threadbare discussion. After incorporating the consensus on the amendments, the resolution was passed unanimously which inter alia called for review and revision of all turtle conservation measures adopted so far, minimum one year trial of any new design of TED or any alternative device to precede its use by the trawl owners, necessary modification of the present design of CIFT TED found to cause excessive escape of fish, amendment of the concerned legislations on 'no fishing zone' following mandatory use of TED, a coordinated effort on the front of turtle protection

and TED use between the four coastal states on the east coast of India (West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu), further in-depth studies on the endangered marine bio-diversity and ecosystems, deployment of special officers of the Fisheries Department in two coastal districts Kendrapara and Bhadrak for better implementation of turtle conservation measures, provision of identity cards for the marine fishermen and colour codes for the fishing vessels by the Coast Guard, more welfare oriented and compensatory schemes for the fishermen to offset their poor conditions and declining fish catch, and above all demarcation of the boundaries of 'no fishing zones' to avoid conflict between fishermen and enforcement authorities.

R.S. Mishra, an ex-Deputy Director of Fisheries, while expressing his whole-hearted sympathy for the plight of the fishermen, suggested that the trawler owners might try as an alternative to TED, a new simple and inexpensive device i.e. Trawl Guard, which is made of only 4 kg of nylon rope and fitted to the mouth of the trawl net. The Trawl Guard would allow even large fishes into the trawl net while preventing turtles and sharks and even logs of wood and other sea debris from entering.

Anwar Khan, Assistant Commandant of Coast Guard, Orissa observed that they are duty bound to seize the vessels found illegally operating in the sanctuary areas, just as they are duty bound to recover the lost and stranded vessels of the fishermen. The Chief Guest of the Valedictory Session, C. Hari Das, Assistant commissioner Fisheries, Government of India observed that he would strive for introduction of more fishermen friendly schemes to compensate their loss, if there be any on account of the use of TED. T.K. Behera President of the Valedictory Session in his concluding address expressed happiness for the active role that the trawl owners played in both deliberation and field demonstration of TEDs through out the Workshop. He requested them to procure TEDs free of cost from their local Departmental store for the purpose of field trial by themselves, if they so wanted.

*Source: Project Swarajya, Cuttack, Orissa, India. (www.projectswarajya.com)*