

## **Poverty alleviation and environmental awareness: Case study of a natural resources management project**

K.P. Black, J. Mathew, M. Baba\* and N.P. Kurian\*

ASR Ltd., P.O. Box 130 48, Hamilton, New Zealand

\* Centre for Earth Science Studies, Trivandrum – 695 031, Kerala, India

The shores of Ashtamudi Estuary (India) are home to thousands of Kollam District's population. Their future - be it poverty or sustainable prosperity - will be significantly affected by decisions made today concerning the estuary's resources and its sustainable management.

Towards this, the **Asia Development Assistance Facility (ADAF)** of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of New Zealand** has provided financial assistance to ASR to develop a **district coastal management plan for the Ashtamudi Estuary**. The uniqueness of this study is augmented by the blending in the expert technical team of scientific, managerial, socio-economic and gender aspects.

The primary objective of the assignment is to provide the basis for and development of a District Coastal Management Plan for Sustainable management of Ashtamudi Estuary; thereby enhancing the sustainability of the water resources.

The complementary objectives are to:

provide the skills and information needed to build Counterpart technical capacity for environmental monitoring and management, thereby enhancing institutional capacity;

provide training for local NGO's, community groups and government representatives in estuarine behaviour, environmental management, technical, socio-economic and gender issues; to empower and enable them to have input to the coastal management plan;

facilitate community participation in the sustainable environmental management of the estuary;

enhance women's access to public decision-making forums through their active role in a Steering Committee for coastal management;

provide effective communication as a means to share results so that the environmental education for the NGOs and community representatives can be passed on to the local people; thereby increasing the environmental awareness and natural resources management skills of the community.

A large amount of information has been collected, both physical and socio-economic leading to the development of social use, chemical, water quality and flow pattern maps

in and around the estuary. A local Steering Committee has been formed consisting of people from a broad and diverse range of viewpoints, to guide the project, maintain local input and develop the direction of the management plan.

This paper presents a typical example of poverty alleviation through environmental improvement and education

**Preferred Session:**

Participatory Approaches to Poverty Alleviation: Lessons For Community Involvement