CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“I have only one request,
I do not ask for money, although I have need of it,
I do not ask for meat. I have only one request,
And all I ask is that you remove the road block from my path”.

(Samantha, 1995)

The world today boasts of the dawn of a new millennium, a brave young world, full of promise and prosperity with the discovery and spread of new media and media resources. The world is in the midst of a media revolution. Print, audio, video and film have become more pervasive than ever before. The earth is encompassed by communication satellites and both rich and poor, although disparate, are linked to a single emerging world of the media. The last few years have witnessed a tremendous growth of interest in how the media work, how they affect people’s daily lives, and how the public might ensure the fulfillment of the staggering potential of the media. More importantly, the media is also referred to as, “the Fourth Realm of the Estate”, that is the fourth pillar in support of the essential tripod of government: the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary.

Thus Media has become a powerful weapon in modern society. There has been a continuous debate on the more or less powerful effects and influence of the media on the public (Klapper, 1960). This power is not only restricted to the influence of the media on their audiences, but also involves the role of the media within the broader framework of the social, cultural, political or economic power structures of society. Media power is generally symbolic and persuasive, in the sense that the media primarily have the potential to control the minds of readers or viewers, but not directly their actions. The media bring change in behavior and attitude of the people by emphasizing on certain issues (Altheide, 1985). Meanwhile, with the revolutionary progress of mass communication, an unprecedented opportunity has been created to share and exchange information for knowledge and social change (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). New technologies in the latest media such
as the Walkman, Cellular phones, handheld Television, and wireless portable computers, make it possible to carry media into places and spaces of everyday life. Media serve the individuals and society in different perspectives. Lasswell (1948) articulates that the mass media serve three major functions for the society namely: \textit{surveillance} of the environment, \textit{correlation} of the various parts of the society and \textit{transmission} of social heritage from one generation to the next. Later, McQuail (2010) added a fourth category which is called \textit{mobilization}, or the ability of the mass media to bring people into particular processes of change and development.

Media also help individuals with information, personal identity, integration and social interaction. It is within the family that opinions on media products and notions of appropriate behavior with media are formed. Already, families converse more via email and Short Message Service (SMS) than they do in person. Tweets and blogs are now the official \textit{lingua franca} of conversation and debate.

According to McCombs and Shaw (1972) media do not exactly tell us what to think but it invite to, ‘what to think about.’ Media make us to think of the roles to be played in the sphere of development and nation building. The basic role of media in national development lie in their capacity and capability to teach, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination (Nwabueze, 2005). Protection of social justice is another role of media in national development, in that the media record, compose or report accounts of events and stories. The responsibility of notifying people about development projects and programs is another major role of media to national development.

Media promote programs such as the Right to Education, Right to Information, Girl-Child Education, Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome- HIV/AIDS awareness, Adult Education, Fighting Drug Addiction and Human-Trafficking as for instance, a nationwide campaign towards ecology and boosting agriculture food production. Keeping the above scenario as the backdrop, this research attempts to investigate and analyze the reach, access and utilization of media resources by women related to fishing in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. This research is carried out under the concept of \textit{Reach, Access and Utilization} where these three concepts percolate into three areas under study. First of
all, it has to be understood that the concept of the *Reach* is used to signify a combination of availability and willingness of the audience to use the media. Thus, first and foremost, the audience should have *Access* to the said media. *Access* would imply two factors, one that they access the medium and the either to read / view / listen to it through other members of their social network or they should have seen or used it. In other words access to information enables people to make sense of their lives, livelihoods and the choices they have to make in the increasingly complex globalized society. Finally, *Utilization* holds the key to reveal how the media is being used or utilized by the respondents under study.

In the present study the term ‘fisherwomen’ or ‘women related to fishing’ is used to indicate women who are engaged in fish related activities such as: marketing, processing, net making, peeling etc. Irrespective of the community they belong to for their livelihood. This is substantiated by Daniel Viswasam Samuel (1986) who says that *fisherwomen* are those who are engaged in fishing and its related activities. Furthermore, Veeraputhiran (1988) defines *fisherwoman* as an active adult female decision maker in a fishing family. The concept of *Media Resources* refers to communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, promotional messages that are disseminated. Media includes newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, internet, cellular phones and other outdoor media.

1.1 Media and Society

Media is a tool in the hands of the government for positive development of the society. The explosive diffusion of computers, telecommunication, broadcast and video media, digital technology, virtual media and media resources is seen in national and global statistics. More than half of the workers in the industrialized world are employed by the rapidly growing information industries, and in almost every industry there are workers, whose primary tasks are to create, collect, process and distribute information. The production, processing, and distribution of information are a major industry throughout the world. By the year 2015 it will account for about 50 percent of the world’s industrial production (Gupta, 1999).
In the modern world advanced information communication technologies are not only the key carriers and processors of information content, but are increasingly vital technologies for economic development. They provide an indispensable infrastructure for all industrial production process. They are also ‘synergetic,’ i.e., they lead to growth in many other industries. They create an elaborate infrastructure around their products and services, similar to the automobile industry in the last century.

Sense of connectedness and social networking are the vital force in any community. Thus we see that there is a complex interaction between the media and society. In the world today, media is considered as a ‘mirror’ of the society. In fact, it is the media which shapes the lives of people. Many times mass media plays the role of a “watch dog” of political democracy. In the last five decades or so, the media and its influence on society, has grown exponentially with the advance of technology. First there was the telegraph and the post offices, then the radio, the newspaper, magazines, television and now the Internet and the news media including palmtops, cellular phones etc. Currently, scientists, businessmen and advertisers are planning to tap into satellites and broadcast commercials and advertisements directly to millions of cellular phones, unsolicited by phone - users.

The ability of the media to reach a wide audience with a strong and influential message has the potential to have a strong social and cultural impact upon society. McLuhan (1964) uses the phrase the medium is the message as a means of explaining how the distribution of a message can often be more important than content of the message itself. It is the persuasiveness of influential media such as television, radio, and print media that have been largely responsible for structuring people’s daily lives and routines. There was a time when scholars and other enthusiasts travelled around the world to gather information, invent new things and traverse areas thus far untouched. But today this is no more necessary. The media brings it all to the society. That is one of the reasons why McLuhan (1964) said, ‘we live in a world of media implosion and we cannot but be engulfed by the omnipresence of the media’. Television broadcasting has an effective control over the society. The Internet creates a space for more diverse political opinions, social and cultural viewpoints and a heightened level of consumer participation. Hence it
cannot be denied that the media plays an agenda-setting function as people tend to share the composite definition of the media of what is important.

Several major changes have occurred in the media industry in the last two decades that have fundamentally altered the way in which the institution of the media operates. The major changes have been

(a) The growth of the media industry

(b) The advancement of satellite communications

(c) The increase in the number of women as consumers of media

(d) The growth of the Internet

As a powerful organized institution media has played an important role in order to focus on the social issues in almost every area.

To be specific, in the making of public opinion, print media has always played a robust role and more significantly in those times when electronic media was nowhere in sight. Since the media and the society are intrinsically and inextricably interlinked with each other, a healthy balance between the two pillars of society is imperative, lest one should dictate to the other for very untenable reasons. An increased interaction between both the media and the people can help enlarge their territories and thus keep at bay certain forces that are out to malign and weaken them.

Hence, it must be stated that traditional values are under tremendous pressure, and time - tested relationships between individuals and institutions have come under close observation. Consumerism and ostentatious life styles have affected the physical and mental set-up of the people. No pursuit or profession is free from the compulsive control of commercialization. Even the media has not remained unaffected by this virus of money power over moral power. Every time social ethos and its harmonious canvas come under threat due to excessive zeal or greed, the effectiveness of the media making people aware of their rights and duties is reduced.
The Media in general is in fact a fantastic development; the heights of human achievements are represented there. Scientific, technological, electronic, electromagnetic and artistic developments combine together in media. Primarily media bring us information, education and entertainment. Media presents us with the lives of several inspiring people who challenge and make our lives. A film like Sir Richard Attenborough’s ‘Gandhi’ is one such example. Media also encourages our latent talents. As a result career opportunities are made available. It is said that in the US today, over 50% of the jobs are media based. Media widens our perspective, gives us a global perspective, and provides common shared experiences at live coverage that everyone watches. Some media events in the television have taken up humanitarian causes and reached out to people in dire need. Programs like Britain’s Telethon have collected large amounts of money by making use of the specific talents of the people in order to help the poor in the third world.

Mission Sapne is a reality television programme by Colours- TV, in which Bollywood entertainers step into the shoes of the ordinary men and women for a day and face hardships to raise funds for those who struggle to make ends meet. The first-of-its-kind allows celebrities from different walks of life to leverage their fame for the benefit of the common man. The show is a dramatic entertainment offering, from the channel, which conveys a strong social message to audiences. The show has an exciting approach towards showcasing the burdens in the life of a common man through the eyes of a celebrity as they work hard to generate funds. Through Mission Sapne, the producer aims to convey to Indian audiences that no person should be looked down upon and that the smallest achievements deserve to be cherished in the grandest manner. In this connection the television programme Satyame Jayate produced by Aamir Khan in India has generated a great deal of awareness and lead many people to change their mind-set for better society.

1.2 Role of Mass Media in the Promotion of Human Life

Today the glare of the media is visible everywhere in several forms in our life. It has opened up many vistas in all spheres of life – social and economic; art and culture; tradition, information and publicity; education and entertainment; politics and so on. Thus, in the present scenario, media has become part and parcel
of human life. This way mass media remains as one of the most powerful instruments of human life (McLuhan, 1964). These days the frontier between mass media, individual and cultural transition has been the subject of investigation for many social scholars since the dawn of the information and communication age.

When analyzed from the above perspective no one can deny the fact that, mass media acts as a catalyst in social transformation and thus effects the required social change. With the right information at the right time mass media is providing a needed social change to the people. It is reported by Alahari (1997) that one of the greatest concerns of many communication scholars is not the effect of mass media on people in general, but the potential function of mass media for bringing desirable social change and for achieving the developmental goals of nations. Several scholars set the stage on the dynamics of development and the role of mass media in achieving developmental goals. The mass media also transmit values among contemporary communities and societies, sometimes causing changes that otherwise would not occur. A lot of media content gives comfort to audiences by reinforcing existing social values. At the same time, media attention to non-mainstream ideas, in both news and fiction forms, requires people to reassess their values and, over time, contributes to the social change. Anthropologists have documented that mass communication can change society. Thus a phenomenal diffusion of innovations occurs when ideas move through the mass media into the society bringing social change.

In this regard a reference can be made to Hall (1960) a major founder of cultural studies and media influence in the 1960s. His studies had been appreciated for being one of the significant contributions in the critical study of the media, society, popular culture, ideological values and message interpretation by active audience. Hall identified four major components that touched the life of the people by use of media. These components are: the shift from behaviour-stimulus cultural studies to all-pervasive social and political forces; the shift from seeing media text as transparent conveyors of meaning to recognizing their structuring function; the shift from the notion of audiences as passive recipients to active agents of media messages; and the shift from a uniform notion of mass audience to one that is separated by different codes (Schulman, 1993). In his research paper on encoding-
decoding, he posits that television programs come to have meaning at different moments, both as part of the production (or encoding) and as part of the moment of reception (and decoding). Encoding-Decoding are related but never identical. Since both are based in their own particular frameworks of knowledge and are formed by the relations of production and the technical infrastructure, they will necessarily be different and produce a related but different meaningful discourse in either production or viewing contexts.

The ‘encoder’ being the producer and the ‘decoder’ being the receiver, the media play a significant role in the life of the people to decode what they wish to receive from the media.

In this process the mass media have caused fundamental changes in human communication. When Gutenberg introduced movable type in the 15th century, people began shifting from largely intuitive interpersonal communication to reading, which, says communication theorist McLuhan, required a different kind of concentration. The result, according to McLuhan, was less spontaneous communication, alienation among individuals and a fragmented society. With electronic, visual media like television, which engage numerous senses and require less cerebral participation than reading, McLuhan saw a return to communication more consistent with human nature. He called it retribution. Not everyone accepts McLuhan’s vision, but there is agreement that the mass media profoundly affect society.

Media is influencing the process of socialization. It has a deep imprint on attitude, conduct and ideologies of people. Thus mass media has become an ombudsman in the process of socialization. The media affect us in many ways: as a major socializing influence, a carrier of culture, a source of information, education and entertainment, an important factor in political communication and participatory democracy, and a communicator of ideological values and norms, attitudes and beliefs. According to Menon (1990) the notion of individuality is lost in the word ‘mass’ and various forms of media such as radio, television, newspaper, etc., report events intended for such enormous number of listeners, viewers, and readers. The advances in telecommunication networks have revolutionized the function of mass
media to serve wider coverage at a faster pace worldwide. This has provided an enabling environment for media in the new era to achieve its ultimate aim of reaching a very large audience helping them to socialize with various cultures and races.

According to McLuhan (1964) the people of the world can be brought closer together by the globalization of communication. The global village is an image of a world in which everyone’s voice has a chance to be heard. Interactive media facilitates participation in global communication and debates, offering entry into public space. The globalization of communication enables us to share in each other’s lives. In this ideal environment of communication the mass media continue to play an important role in democracy, informing people and generating discussion about events and issues worldwide. The globalization of communication is seen as an agent of empowerment, education and equality.

Media provide education in two ways – one formal and another informal. In the formal type, it directly imparts syllabus based education to students. Radio and Television are broadcasting such programs in various formats. In recent years, even the print media is publishing syllabus based articles.

In the modern world, social media is proving to be an important bridge between an employer and its staff as an increasing percentage of employees is using this medium before making any career move. The advent of online talent communities and online job boards not only helps companies to find right talent, it also helps employees to have more information about their preferred places to work. The arrival of digital and online communications has opened up a plethora of conversations about work and the work-place. With changing mindsets and perceptions, more online talent communities have sprouted and employees also seem to be more eager now to learn about company details, work-place and reputation before applying for a job and at the same time get access to job opportunities along with trusted industry information.

Media play a vital role in promoting ecological sensitivity in human society. Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous organization under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, was set up in 1989, has initiated several
programmes on gender and technology communication to promote environment and technology awareness among the masses and to develop and disseminate quality resource material and eco-friendly technologies for the stakeholders especially the rural people.

As a critical instrument media plays a crucial role in democracies by constituting the main source of information, which provides the society with knowledge and a variety of experiences. Peace media can be defined as the use of “radio, television, and printed journalism, to promote peace, to disseminate truthful information or alternate viewpoints that could turn public sentiment towards peaceful resolution of conflicts, or to counter hate radio. It also serves as a forum for public debate, conception and development of opinions. Media is thus one of the principal agents for societal development, democracy and good governance, and a crucial element in areas of conflict. The role of media in conflict has increased its place in public attention. Policy makers, journalists, and social scientists all point out to the central role of the press in events such as the genocide in Rwanda, Sri Lanka, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the war in Bosnia, Jammu and Kashmir, Kargil and Afghanistan and more recently – Syria. There are efforts to promote the use of media to facilitate conflict resolution and efforts towards lasting peace. However, media can also be a weapon of violence that propagates biased information and manipulate societies or groups in conflict with divisive ideologies and harmful actions.

Mass Media in India are actively involved in the tasks related to different aspects of national development and they are assisting the government and the masses in social, economic and political development. Thus, mass media have contributed to the mobilization of human resources for national development. This is evident from the tremendous changes that have taken place in the entire range of human activities in the country. Research studies by communication scholars have also proved that mass media have immensely aided and assisted the rate and scope of development. The interaction between media and society from the point of view of development is constant and cumulative. Media have communicated to the people about our country’s five year plans, development programmes, and educational policies, and this has motivated the people to become partners in the progress of the
country. The Farm technology is reaching the rural masses through mass communication media such as radio and films which has become a link between university laboratories and farmers. This has contributed to tremendous agricultural progress and led to the green revolution in the country.

Mass Media like television and radio have made a great impact on the families by changing their way of life. In the last ten years Indian families have undergone drastic changes as far as family relations, standard of living, style of living and buying habits are concerned. Though mass media do not involve individuals directly, yet they bring changes largely in the psychological domain. They capture the audience by changing their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge and values systems. Mass media create an impact by playing their role as agents and reflectors of change and reinforcing dominant values and attitudes in society. This has a significant impact on the decisions of planners, and policy makers of the country.

Mass Media in India such as television, radio, newspaper, try to offer educational and enrichment messages for farmers, school children, youth, women, and other groups. The impact and motivation is very quick through mass media in the class rooms. Folk media have been very effective in promoting the message of literacy, mobilizing women and bringing them together to discuss issues related to their everyday lives. Street plays have proved very effective in integrating and mobilizing women for anti-arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh. Exposure to violence and terrorism in many parts of the world has helped the people to become more sensitive to the suffering of the people.

The relationship between media and poverty eradication was the theme for the 2006 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Press Freedom Day. First, free and independent media serves as an information conduit to facilitate good governance, creating and developing the relations between an informed, critical, and participatory population and responsive elected officials. Second, free and independent media brings with it a basket of goods, including the recognition and strengthening of basic human rights, a healthy civil society, political transparency, and sustainable economic development, which
have all repeatedly demonstrated their importance in the alleviation of poverty. Thus the skilled and viable independent media sector is a society’s most promising tool for providing citizens the information they need to bring about as well as sustain government reform and poverty reduction. Media helps alleviating poverty by disseminating information about poverty reduction strategies and facilitating their monitoring and implementation.

John Dewey (1998) stated that education could not be limited within the teacher and they taught without social environment. So mass media is one such potent force in the social environment of education. Through modern electronic techniques and technologies, mass media prove that education is really comprehensive and not confined within the four walls of the classroom. Society gets a great deal of information from the widespread mass media i.e. newspaper, TV, radio, magazines, journals, films, etc. It is estimated that mass media may substitute the real classroom teaching in future.

Mass Media help in providing vocational and professional information to large groups of the community. People can be aware of different problems of the society and their role in changing society through mass media. People are made aware of their rights and duties as citizens of the nation. Media help in forming suitable habits through different programmes and they utilize their leisure time in a productive way. It also influences the behavior of the people through different programmes through social media. Now in an advanced society mass media are not treated as informal agencies of education. They are called non-formal agencies due to their wide coverage of educational items in a systematic manner. It is viewed that these media can substitute the classroom teaching in future. Therefore, mass media are the main means of educating both rural and urban society. These are the cheapest and quickest means of education for the people. The impact and motivation is very quick through social media. Teachers and many social workers have started using educational media with its multifarious methods effectively in the classrooms and in village meetings. Thus many drop-outs, women and girl children get an opportunity to learn more.
Mass Media is an effective partner in promoting scientific development of a country. Traditionally the media has been communicating research findings when there are success stories in particular. Journalists are in quite a unique position, potentially being the voice of policymakers, the voice of scientific invention and the voice of researchers and hence, they potentially can be powerful catalysts for change. The media has been creating opportunities for young scientists to know the potential of scientific development in the country. It is the media that not only highlights the latest development in science and technology but also publishes research articles and subsequently takes the people forward to the horizons of new ways of living.

The Mass Media campaigns around the world are intensively employed for promoting public health (Noar, 2006). Mass media attempt to teach people the learning of correct health information and knowledge, the changing of health attitudes, values and the establishment of a new health behavior. Mass Media promote health programmes by mobilizing and supporting local agencies and professionals who have direct access to individuals within the target population. Media also bring together partnerships of public, voluntary and private bodies and professional organizations. It also informs and educates the public and thus setting the agenda for public debate on health, thereby modifying the climate of opinion surrounding it. Mass Media also encourages the local and national policy makers so as to create a supportive environment within which people are more able to change their behavior. In Tamil Nadu many Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) such as M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) with the help of media have reached out to the rural people for better health care facilities. A good number of journals, television programmes and newspapers regularly publish articles on health care and thus help people to be more health conscious these days.

The media provides most of the information about human rights, and in the event of failure of the media to do so “fairly, accurately, or consistently, public perceptions will be unfair, inaccurate and inconsistent” (Heinze & Freedman, 2010). The media takes up the human rights agenda by publishing or broadcasting human rights programmes. In the words of Apodaca, “The media can disseminate human rights information, mobilize human rights (NGOs), strengthen popular
participation in civil society, promote tolerance, and shine a light on government activity” (2007). Thus in many ways the mass media take steps to fight against human rights violations. These media often serve as “monitors” and “sources of information” for human rights stories. The (NGOs) use the global media to highlight abuses, which in turn will “shame “abusers to put an end to their attitude (Cmiel, 2004, cited in Apodaca, 2007). The use of the internet by notable human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House and a host of others attest to this. The media foster the concept of “collective rights” when minority social groups are given the chance to partake in public discussion (Erni, 2009). This in turn provides a safe environment for the protection and promotion of human rights.

1.3 Fishing Community in the World

Asia assists as the backbone of world fisheries, accounting for nearly 77% of inland production and about 42% of marine production of the total global fish production of around 120 million tonnes annually (William et al., 1998). Countries which contribute more than 1 million tonnes each year to global fish production are in Asia, namely China, India, Indonesia, Japan, North and South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. The region is also a cradle of aquaculture, the most rapidly developing area in the fisheries sector, contributing approximately 90% to the total annual global aquaculture production of about 27.8 million tonnes (William et al., 1998). Although no accurate estimates are available on the actual number of people involved in fisheries throughout the region, it is believed that several million men and women are engaged in fisheries and fisheries related - activities. The degree differs from country to country and within the country, from region to region depending on prevailing social and cultural values.

Fish is an important source of food. According to the report of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, worldwide 1 billion people, mostly in developing countries, depend on fish as their primary source of protein. An estimated 200 million people are directly or indirectly engaged in the fish and seafood industries. Globally, capture fisheries and aquaculture produced 134 million tonnes of fish during 2010 with per capita supply of 17.2 kg. Fish supplies 35-60
percent animal protein requirement of many Asian countries. (Gopa Kumar, 1997). Around 180 countries trade marine products on a global basis. According to the findings the highest number of fisherpersons and aquaculture workers are in Asia (85 percent of the world total), followed by Africa (7 percent), Europe, South America, North and Central America (about 2 percent each) and Oceania (0.2 percent).

Further the report ascertains that the developing countries continue to play an important role in supplying sea food to the world markets. It is assessed that in the year 2012, the net export revenues reached $35.3 billion which is higher than those for other agricultural products combined including rice, meat, milk, sugar and bananas. Global fishery production from wild capture fisheries and aquaculture is expected to set a record in 2013 at 160 million tonnes, up from 157 million tonnes the previous year, while exports will reach $136 billion. The small scale community fisheries employ 50 of the world’s 51 million fisheries mostly from developing countries (Berkes & Mahon, 2001).

According to International Collective in Support of Fish Workers (ICSF) survey, more than 120 million people throughout the world are estimated to depend on fish for full or part of their income. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (2000), estimates that 35 million people worldwide are directly engaged in fishing and fish farming. It is assessed that majority of them are small-scale, artisan fishers seeking out a living from coastal and in-shore resources. It is a fact that fishing industry is an important and vital source of life and livelihood for millions of people around the world.

Social status of the fishing community is generally low. The fishing community is socially isolated, disadvantaged and low in the caste category. With low income and educational levels, fishing communities in the world as a whole have a low status. They are regarded as socially inferior to those engaged in most other occupations. Fishing communities are poorly served in the areas of health, education and community welfare. The education of the youngsters in the fishing communities does not continue to a desirable level. Their families cannot afford the cost of education or the manpower loss that education entails for their fishing
operations. The infrastructure development benefits are not given to rural communities due to the lack of attention of the central government. One of the major social and economic issues in inland capture fisheries is increasing inflow of fishermen to the fishery against the gradual decline of production due to over-exploitation of fishery and decline of productivity.

Fishing communities face a number of problems involving social, economic, technical and even ethnic factors. The income of the fishing community is generally below the poverty line, especially during the lean period. Within the fishing community, incomes are uneven, and disparities are frequently very high, especially between poorly equipped fishermen and those with mechanized boats. Many do not receive any benefits from improved technology as it is beyond their reach. Marketing is in the hands of the middlemen whose hold is more secure because they extend credit to fishermen. Because of the lack of adequate institutional credit facilities on reasonable terms, fishermen are forced to depend on informal credit facilities which bring a lot of disadvantages. In the fishing industry the total catch is increasing but the catch per fisherman is decreasing. This is because the growth rate of fishermen’s population is higher than that of fish production, and no effective resource management has been implemented. Fishing is a seasonal activity in many parts of the world and although alternative sources of livelihood are necessary but they do not exist in most areas. The ability to earn depends on the ownership of assets such as craft and gear. These are inequitably distributed due to social and economic imbalances. Many fishermen, therefore, depend on other people’s assets for a livelihood. Lack of preservation facilities results in spoilage or wastage that leads to great loss in families.

1.4 Fishing Community in India

Fishing industry is one of the central sectors in India. Fishing industry in India is believed to have a long history. It is said that Kautilya’s Arthashastra (321-300 B.C) and King Someswara’s Manasoltara (1127 A.D) each refer to fish culture in India. India is the seventh largest fish producing country in the world. Its total fish production has been 51.40 lakh tonnes contributing 4.49 percent of the world fish catch. It has a coastline of 8041 kms and an exclusive economic zone of 2.02 million
sq. kms. (Bisoyi, 2005). The peninsular India forms a land mass thrusting southwards into the Indian Ocean dividing it into two parts the Bay of Bengal in the East and the Arabian Sea in the West. The west coast comprises of the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala and Goa and the east consist of West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Union territory of Pondicherry. As per the livestock census of 1992 (cited in GOI, 2000), the total number of fisherpersons in the country is 6.7 million, of whom men numbered 2.4 million, women 2 million and children 2.3 million (Mathew, 2003). Just over one third of full-time fishermen are located on India’s east coast, and 70% of the marine fish production originates from the west (Vivekananda, 2002). For centuries, India has had a traditional practice of fish culture in small ponds in eastern India. India has 8,041 kilometers of marine coastline, 3,827 fishing villages, and 1,914 traditional fish landing centers. India’s fresh canal 2.9 million hectares of minor and major reservoirs, 2.4 million hectares of ponds and lakes, and about 0.8 million hectares of flood plain wetlands and water bodies provides the strength of the industry. As of 2010, marine and freshwater resources offered a combined sustainable catch fishing potential of over 4 million metric tonnes of fish. According to reports from 1990 through 2010 Indian fish industry growth has accelerated, reaching a total marine and fresh water fish production to about 8 million metric tonnes.

The Government of India has made special efforts to promote extensive and intensive inland fish farming, modernize coastal fisheries, and encourage deep-sea fishing through joint ventures. These and many more efforts led to a more than fourfold increase in coastal fish production from 520,000 tonnes in the Financial Year 1950 to 204 million tonnes in the Financial Year 1990. In the years 1990 to 2007, fish production in India had grown at a higher rate than food grains, milk, eggs, and other food items. Marine Fisheries contributes to food security and provides direct employment to over 1.5 million fishing people besides others indirectly dependent on the sector. In 2008 India was the sixth largest producer of marine and freshwater capture fisheries, and the second largest aquaculture farmed fish producer in the world. In economic terms catch fishing in India employs about 14.5 million people. The fish products from India are well received by almost half of world’s countries, creating export-driven employment opportunities in India and
greater food security for the world. During the past decades the Indian fisheries and aquaculture has witnessed improvements in craft, tackle and farming methods. The total marine fisher-folk population of 3.57 million is in 3,305 marine fishing villages spread across the coastal States and Union Territories. Of these, 0.90 million are active fisher people, and another 0.76 million, fisher people are involved in other fisheries related activities. However, despite the steady growth in total fish production, a fish farmer’s average annual production in India is only 2 metric tonnes per person, compared to 172 tonnes in Norway, 72 tonnes in Chile, and 6 tonnes per fisherman in China.

The Government of India launched National Fisheries Development Board in 2006. Its headquarters are in Hyderabad. It is reported that there are about 0.5 million fishing households located all along the Indian coast and a total of 3 million Fishing persons inhabiting the coastal villages. It is also stated that the average number of sea going fishermen is 282 in the coastal villages. In 2000, there were 1.8 million full-time fishermen, 1.4 million part-time fishermen, and 2.5 occasional fishermen, many of whom worked as salt makers, ferrymen, or operated boats for hire. Out of 1.2 million Fishing households in post-harvest sector, women occupy a considerable proportion of more than 0.5 million (Sathiadhas et al., 2003). Women’s involvement in fisheries is more significant than often assumed. The fisheries sector has long been considered a male domain, signifying a sense of adventure and risk valued by men but from which women are often excluded. Women also occupy a very good proportion of the workforce in export oriented processing of cuttlefish, lobsters, and other fish varieties.

In India, in the marine sector alone fisherwomen number about 11 lakh, inhabiting about 2500 coastal villages (CMFRI, 1980). As it has been observed that the common feature among these women throughout the country is the hardship, primarily economic in nature. Even such of these fisherwomen who are fortunate to be engaged in some economic activity generally face a host of many other problems. For example, there is little protection of wages or employment, as small-scale fisheries are usually managed based on unwritten rules. The perishable nature of fish, poor and costly transport facilities which do not permit them to buy fish
directly from the landing centres, and competition from the organized sector add to the problems of the fisherwoman.

However, women’s engagement in small-scale capture fisheries-related activities, including pre and post-harvesting work, is estimated at 46% in nine major fish producing countries (FAO, World Fish, World Bank, 2008). These figures may be the tip of an iceberg. If gleaning and aquaculture were included, women’s involvement could be higher. However, this kind of formal enumeration rarely reveals the informal ways in which women are essential to pursuing livelihoods in communities engaged in small-scale fishing.

1.5 Fishing Community in Tamil Nadu

The information on various coastal parameters like coastal length, continental shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and territorial water are provided in the table below:

Table-1.1

Coastal Information of Tamil Nadu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>East Coast</th>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal length in Km</td>
<td>1016</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Shelf up to 50 M depth</td>
<td>22411</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>23255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 200 M depth</td>
<td>11205</td>
<td>6952</td>
<td>18157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total continental shelf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive Economic Zone (in million km)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial waters in km</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Fisheries Statistics of Tamil Nadu

The fishing industry has a significant place in the culture and economy of Tamil Nadu. The state of Tamil Nadu with a coastline of 1076 kms constitutes about 15 percent of the total costal length of India. When compared to the 1986 survey of fishing communities in Tamil Nadu, there has been an increase in population by 46.55 percent in the year 2000. The percentage of poor people in the coastal areas, according to National Institute for Rural Development (NIRD,2000) was 40 percent
in northern zone, 13 percent in the central zone and 31 percent in southern zone respectively.

According to the report by the Marine Fisheries Census 2010, Tamil Nadu, that in Tamil Nadu there are 573 marine fishing villages wherein fishermen reside. There were 1, 92,697 marine fishermen households in the State with the total population of 8, 02,912. There are 71, 541 fisher folk engaged in fishing activities, such as marketing (52%), labourers (18%), curing/processing (10%) making/repairing net (10%) and peeling (4%). In this women outweigh men in fishing allied activities to (71%). Among the major fishing allied activities, women dominated in marketing of fish (89%), peeling (87%) and curing and processing (86%).

The state of Tamil Nadu is one of the major fish consuming states. It is stated that the state consumes 99 percent of its total production in terms of volume and surprisingly only about one percent is exported. According to one report the average annual consumption of fish in the State declined about 8 kilograms per head during 1983-84 to 5 kg in 1988-89, which is still high compared to the average of 3.3 kg level for the whole country.

The average income of a fishing family per annum in 1978 was Rs. 2,469, which increased to Rs. 2,915 in 1986 (census 2000). The current average annual per capita income of the fishing community in the state is Rs. 6,573, the increase being a result of better value realization for the fish in the markets. The census also reveals that 73 percent of the total fishers’ families have an income of less than Rs. 3,500 per annum and they may be rated as living below the poverty line. The contribution of state fish production to national production has been almost constant with 12 percent between the years 1997-2000.

The Tamil Nadu coastal belt begins from north of Chennai near the Pulicat Lake to the West of Kanyakumari in the South. The continental shelf extends up to 41,412 km with 23,255 km being up to 50 m depths and 18,157 between 51-200m depths. Wedge Bank, which is located near Colachel in Kanyakumari, is considered to be one of the richest fishing grounds in the country. The coastal region can be considered into four zones as follows:
a) *Coromandel Coast* consists of the coastal areas from Kodaiakkarai in Thanjavur district in the south, to the north of Chennai surf-beaten coasts, interspersed with coral reefs. The coast is more or less a straight-line covering the districts of Thiruvallore, Chennai, Kancheepuram, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur and part of Thanjavur.

b) *Palk Bay* region covers the areas from Pamban in Ramanathapuram district to Kodiakkarai in Thanjavur district. This area is characterized with sandy shallows, with depth not exceeding eight fathoms with intermittent muddy stretches, and coral reefs. This region forming roughly the three sides of the shallow sea known as the Palk Strait, affords little shelter except at the northern and southern ends, where the ports of Muthupet and Pamban are respectively situated. However, there are a few bays and headlands, breaking the seafront and furnishing shelter in varying degrees to fleets of small traditional craft.

c) *Gulf of Mannar* comprises of the areas of the districts of KanyaKumari, Tirunelveli, a portion of Ramanathapuram and the bifurcated district of Thuthukudi, with the coast stretching up to Pamban. The Gulf of Mannar coast is characterized by submerged chains of coral reefs with high surf conditions in the southern end. There is a chain of islands, which stretch intermittently parallel with the coast from Pamban to Thriruchendur in the Tirunevelli and Thutukudi districts.

d) *West Coast* covers KanyaKumari district with 60 km of the west coast of Tamil Nadu. The Arabian Sea forms the major part of West Coast. The Union Territory of Puducherry, with a coastline of approximately 50 km with 24 fishing villages, falls in the Coromondel coast zone, and shares all the features of the fishing systems and practices as the neighbouring parts of Tamil Nadu.

**1.5.1 Socio – Economic Profile of Fishing Community in Tamil Nadu**

Socio – economic profile of fisher folk population of Tamil Nadu during the year 2010 is presented in the table below:
Table-1.2

**Socio-Economic Profile of Fishing Community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Actual fishing</th>
<th>Fish seed collection</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>Full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvallur</td>
<td>7,198</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>13,678</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanchipuram</td>
<td>8,835</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villupuram</td>
<td>4,599</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddalore</td>
<td>14,376</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagapattinam</td>
<td>22,229</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvarur</td>
<td>1,975</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanjavur</td>
<td>7,383</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudukkottai</td>
<td>8,083</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>44,815</td>
<td>3,938</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuticorin</td>
<td>20,759</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirunelveli</td>
<td>5,334</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Directorate of Fisheries, Chennai.*

This table presents the overall distribution of fishing community as found in the civil districts in Tamil Nadu.

According to the available census, there has been an increase in the number of women belonging to the fishing communities who are employed in different livelihood occupations between 1986 and 2000 from 25,000, the numbers grew to over 37,000 during the period. There is also a clear increase in the number of women involved in fish processing and trade between 1986 and 2000. As against a total of 10,175 fresh fish sellers in 1986, the numbers rose to 16,790 in 2000 and the dried fish traders increased from 3625 to 7170 during the same period. Some other livelihood activities where women had been directly employed, such as net making and other occupations showed a steep decline in terms of the numbers employed. Owing to the increase in population and globalization factor the displacement was noticed in all the sectors of fishing.
Fishing communities in Tamil Nadu are not homogenous, as they belong to different castes and creeds. These communities have their own distinct social and cultural structures depending on the coast where they inhabit. The communities have evolved their own management and socialization systems. The evolution of traditional management system depend on the resource and the environment in which the resource existed and the interactions between people to extract these resources (Kurien, 1991).

Three main caste groups have occupied the coast land of Tamil Nadu. They are: Pattinavars, Mukkuvars, and Paravas.

**Pattinavars**

Pattinavars are the dominant fishing group inhabiting along the Bay of Bengal coast, from East Coast on the Krishna River, Andhra Pradesh to Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu. This fishing community has developed a distinct sociological structure that is independent of the government structures institutionalized by the state. The headmen (nattamai) control the whole on-shore and off-shore fish business. These headmen are also assisted by Thandkaran and a Paraiyan Chalavathi. They follow local panchayat system to maintain community cohesiveness, presiding over all matters including weddings, religious ceremonies, maintenance of community funds, dispensing justice, and enforcing judicial actions and enquiries. The village panchayat mediates relationships with all external institutions and structures except during serious conflicts. This traditional caste panchayat governs over the business transaction of fish trade and other physical territories.

Mathew (1991) in his study of Pattinavars narrates how the Pattinavars who inhabit the Pulicat region of Northern Tamil Nadu bordering Andhra Pradesh, differ from the rest of the Pattinavar communities in the state by virtue of a unique fishing practice that they follow called the *padu* system. It is a traditional system of granting entitlements to eligible members of a particular community (the *pattinavars*) in certain designated fishing grounds of the Pulicat Lake. Padu refers to ‘fishing site or ground’. According to the local custom the eligible fishermen are allowed access by means of a lottery system wherein each village knows at the outset the designated
day of the year for that particular village in that specific *padu*. Apart from access to fish in the *padu*, the entitlements also differ depending on the gear used, specifically the use of stake net (*suthuvalai*) or the big net (*badivalai*), which is usually owned by the community “elite”. Interestingly this system has been working well among the Pattinavars to uplift their socio-economic standard.

*Mukkuvar*

The *Mukkuvars* inhabit the Southern coast of India, in Kanyakumari and settling as far north as the Malabar Coast on the West. They are believed to have emigrated from Sri Lanka. *Mukkuvars* were originally Hindus but converted in large numbers to Christianity, with the advent of the Portugese Jesuits during the 16th century. A major cultural difference between the *mukkuvars* from the southern and northern parts of the western coast is that while the northerners practice matriarchal lineage (*marumakkatthayam*), quite significant in Kerala, those of the south adopt patriarchal system (*makkatthayam*). This community is well-knit and also very traditional in their social and cultural structures. Every member of the fishing community takes pain to help the other family in dire need. As for them fishing is a community activity and the whole village celebrates and enjoys the fishing trade.

*Paravars*

The *Paravars* inhabit the coastal belt from Kanyakumari to Rameswaram. They are believed to be the chiefs of this coastal region where they ruled their areas as subordinates of the Pandyas of the Sangam age. The *paravars* adopted the Christian faith when it was offered as protection by the English to avoid harassment by Arab fleets and the Nayaka armies. The community engaged in marine fishing, pearl diving, trading and even piracy. They have a strong sense of group identity based on their occupation, caste polity, kinship and even exclusive settlements that distinguished them from other people. The *paravars* function under a caste head, *jathithalaivan*, who essentially controls the pearl fishing activities and revenues from their occupation or *jathi-tholil*, which was confined to their caste polity (*nambarajyam*). Although fishing was historically their domain, the advent of mechanized boats, made fishing a lucrative occupation bringing with it large migrations into the region.
While fishing in general, men face the sea together, this makes trust between each other crucial. Profits from fishing are risk-driven and individual income erratic. Unlike agriculture, it is not possible to define boundaries of ownership in the sea; and determining individual entitlement is critical. Failure to do so can lead to severe conflicts over sharing resources, escalating into blood feuds that extend over several decades. As a whole, fishing communities have evolved mechanisms to ensure division of risks and profits. The predominant work relationships are based on shares on the catch obtained. Each member of the crew bears a portion of the risk and is entitled to a share in the catch. Shares could also be given to the vulnerable in the village or used for community purposes and pools as a buffer in individual problems. A critical collective concern of the village and the panchayat is maintaining peace. In case of conflicts between members, the entire village acts to resolve, restore balance and compensate for damages incurred.

Areas of marketing of fish by female vendors in Tamil Nadu are generally done in the following ways:

a. *House to house sale:* Most of the women fish vendors go from house to house to sell fish, mainly in urban and semi-urban areas. Since visits are made to the same area every day, the vendors get to know consumer preferences and can make purchase accordingly. In this interaction a cordial relationship is usually built up between the vendors and the families, with the vendor gutting and cleaning the fish for them and occasionally receiving gifts, apart from payment for the fish.

b. *Licensed Markets:* These markets, that are managed, or owned by panchayats or local men, accommodate a number of small sellers who are charged a certain amount for the privilege of a place in the market. The atmosphere in such market is highly competitive.

c. *Unlicensed Markets/Hawking:* Some women sell fish at road sides, market centres and junctions where they can attract crowds. They are often harassed by the police for hawking at open places.
The table below categorically states the occupational status of fisherwomen:

**Table 1.3**

*Occupational Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Marketing of fish</th>
<th>Making/Repairing net</th>
<th>Curing/Processing</th>
<th>Peeling</th>
<th>Labourer</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvallur</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1,966</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>5,187</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanchipuram</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5,423</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villupuram</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddalore</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1,752</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagapattinam</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>6,303</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvarur</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanjavur</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudukkottai</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>1,564</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>1,505</td>
<td>2,371</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuticorin</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>2,305</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirunelveli</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanyakumari</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>2,527</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Directorate of Fisheries, Chennai,*

This table highlights the percentage of women involved in different types of work in the fishing industry.
1.6 Media Coverage on Fishing Community

Media is an influential means of communication that reaches to a large audience using different kinds of communication methods through magazines, newspapers, radios, television, mobile phone and Internet. Knowledge or messages is transferred or transmitted to a large, wide, scattered audience by use of these media. Many define Media Coverage as the extent or degree to which something is observed, analyzed and reported.

Among all the main media, Radio, Newspaper, Television and Internet give more coverage on fishing community. The following analysis will highlight the coverage by Print media.

In South India, particularly, the national newspapers such as, The Indian Express, The Times of India, The Hindu and Deccan Chronicle have been publishing articles and allotting columns periodically to help the fishing community. In a special way during the times of cyclone and tsunami these dailies play an effective role to help the fishing community. The Tamil newspapers and magazines have been publishing articles, information from the government and other required materials through the newspapers. It may be noted that almost every household buys a newspaper or reads it from the community centres or from the local tea-shops. However, recent developments on the Internet are posing major threats to its business model, paid circulation is declining in most countries, and advertising revenue, which makes up the bulk of the newspapers’ income, is shifting from print to online; some commentators, nevertheless, point out that historically the new media such as radio and television did not entirely supplant the existing population.

1.6.1 Radio and Fishing Community

1.6.1.1 Apam FM Station

Radio has been serving as one of the useful media for the fishing community in India. The All India Radio with its Commercial branch (Vividh Bharathi Broadcasting Unit) has been broadcasting several programmes for the fishing community. The Frequency modulation (FM) broadcasting has been reaching out to
many fishing communities in times of natural calamities. Another communication medium that brought about a major benefit to the fishermen from Moore was the Apam Community (FM) Station. According to a study, every dawn before the fishermen embarked on their fishing expeditions, they would wait and listen to the weather forecast for the day on the radio in their own language before they went to sea. This service of the Station was more valuable to them than anything else in their vocation or trade. It helped them avoid storms and other unpredictable hazards at sea. Besides, relevant information, education, entertainment and other motivational programmes that the station was broadcasting to mobilize the rural folks for development as far as communication was concerned, allowing the people to go to the studio to undertake some traditional performances themselves (Abissath, 2005).

Radio has been very effective in supporting awareness raising, information sharing for livelihoods, disaster mitigation, informal education and the promotion of rights. Their use should be expanded systematically, learning from accepted leaders in these sectors.

1.6.1.2 Radio Alakal

Radio Alakal has been on air since 1 May 2006, and it is a community radio station in every respect except one: it has no station, no license to broadcast. Radio Alakal is ‘narrowcast’ over loud-speakers from four fish landing centers around Trivandrum, Kerala and does not reach a vital slice of its target audience – the fishermen out at sea, who need weather updates and storm warnings, information on fish location and fish prices, all of which could be easily delivered to them over low power FM radio. India is not the only country in South Asia which does not permit communities to own and operate radio stations. At the Global Knowledge Partnership’s International Forum on Cross-Sector Partnerships in Colombo, Sri Lanka (8-9 May 2006), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) experts and media persons from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Thailand, Kenya and a host of developing nations cited the lack of an enabling regulatory framework for (ICTs) as one of the main stumbling blocks to the use of (ICT) for development and creating prosperity through innovation. (I4D Magazine – August Issue, 2006).
1.6.1.3 *Kalanjiam Community Radio*

Useful Informative programs were narrowcast for the people in Nagapattinam district through Kalanjiam Community Radio – Janasakthi, Tamil; / Feb. 24 – 2007. India’s first community radio launched for disaster management in Nagapattinam district with partnership between the Nagapattinam community, the (NGOs) Development of Human Action (DHAN) Foundation and Voices, and is supported by United Nations Development Program. – Dinamani, Tamil, Feb. 24, 2007. Kalanjiam Community Radio launched for the fishermen in Nagapattinam district (Dinamalar, Tamil Newspaper, Feb. 24, 2007).

The training institute for Fishermen opened at Poompuhar by the M S Swaminathan Research Institute creates self-sustaining communication through capacity building. The vision is to create a brand Poompuhar for their catch in a year’s time. It is expected to provide a collaborative platform for the fisher folk, scientists, fish-dependent ancillary activities, and banks. The information is transmitted through Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) – enabled mobile service provider and World Space Radio Receiver and also public address system. Genetic information is converted to location – specific information.

1.6.2 *New Media and Fishing Community*

Today, Internet has overtaken many media to reach out to all categories of people effectively. The pilot Fishnet set up by the Ilene local government in Ondo State, Nigeria, used meetings, television, leaflets, radio, posters and other methods, supervised by fisher cooperative groups, to share user-driven content on fish production techniques. The success of the project’s listening groups also showed the value of targeting such ICT products to groups rather than individuals.

Food and livelihood security issues and the lack of extension support for fishing people and fish farmers can be addressed through information networks. New opportunities can emerge from combining mobile and Internet networking technologies such as Wireless Fidelity (WiFi), Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMax), digital radio, satellite broadcasting (such as World Space or the Indian national satellite systems) and continuing developments in low-cost, low-power computers. This can enable access to a range of government
services (e-government), for example, by marginalized, mobile and/or remote fishing communities. If supported by capacity building, this also opens up educational, health and other content of crucial importance to livelihoods.

The ICTs are claimed to be “accelerating the decline of fish populations, in that they enable commercial fishing vessels to exploit stocks in areas once considered too difficult to fish”. Furthermore, well-resourced developed countries and larger enterprises can gain competitive advantage as they apply ICTs, threatening the livelihoods of local fishers, especially in developing countries. As technology improves, small-scale fishing communities may also take greater risks, seeking more distant fishing grounds or competing with larger vessels. All of this activity increases pressure on fish stocks. While these implications must be considered in development planning, some important lessons can also be identified at this stage. The Internet remains the most powerful tool for accessing and sharing knowledge through access to email and information resources. It also opens new possibilities for engagement of all the fishers with global audiences and processes.

Kerala Independent Fish Workers Federation in south India has trained fishing people to use of new communication media and technologies such as computer-based applications, Internet, e-mail, Global Positioning System (GPS), fish finders, Eco sound, mobile phones and hand radios. It is also setting up information centres to provide its members with information on fishing and commerce and has made it an online fortnightly publication.

Three years ago, M S Swaminathan, one of India’s best-known social scientists, chose a village for a pilot project, a demonstration for Delhi government policy works that media could change the lives of the poor. Through his Chennai-based research foundation, Swaminathan established a minimalist communications network linking phoneless Veerampattinam with the city of Pondicherry. (Sanjay Kapoor Asia Week, 29/06/2001). Four times a day, a local volunteer checks the Web and broadcasts the information through a village public address system. Every evening as the volunteer sits sipping tea at a nearby stall; he can listen and decide whether it is safe to go fishing the next day.
1.6.3 Mobile Phones and Fishing Community

Among all the communication tools Mobile phones have a phenomenal coverage on users world-wide, so much so that they have become indispensable. Mobile phones, by virtue of their role as carriers and conduits of information make rural and undeveloped markets more efficient. At the marketing end, Mobile phones help coordinate supply and demand, and merchants and transporters are able to take advantage of the free flow of price information by catering to demand in undersupplied markets. There is also far less wastage of time and resources in all segments of the fishing community.

A study was conducted in Kerala, using Mobile phone at sea, fishermen are able to respond quickly to market demand and prevent unnecessary wastage of catch-fish being a highly perishable commodity a common occurrence before the adoption of phones. Patterson and team chose five villages in Tuticorin coast of Gulf Mannar, Southeastern India to study the empowerment of local fisherwomen Self-Help-Groups (SHG) and to discover the reducing pressure on coral reef resources through greater awareness and education about marine environment and resources and thus minimize overall economic vulnerability of coastal communities.

Aneela Babar, Judith Shaw and Marika Vicziany from Monash Asia Institute, Monash University studied the Mobile Phone access and usage among female micro-entrepreneurs in Bombay city. A study is also made on the role of mobile phones in the non-formal and informal context among rural women from resources poor communities by Balasubrmanian and team.

In this regard it is apt to note that the Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) in collaboration with Coastal Ocean Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIA) in East Africa, and Nykopings Folkhogskola in Sweden initiated the Information and Communication Technology based activities among fisherwomen Self-Help-Groups in India. The impact of Mobile phone technology in adult education has also been tried in other parts of the world as a contributor to national development in Southern Africa (Oduaran and Okukpon, 2005) and in adult Education and Training in Ireland (Morrissey and McNamara 2004).
1.6.4 ICT in Fishing Community

A good deal of coverage is given by the village centred communication technology started by DHAN Foundation in Tamil Nadu. DHAN Foundation is a community media initiative started after Tsunami in 2004 in Tamil Nadu. This foundation started working intensively with the affected fishing and farming communities along the coast with a long term development focus. The main area of intervention was to empower the community in all aspects, particularly in building capacity of the community for disaster management. Applications of Information and Communication Technology were introduced through the Village Information Centers connected with internet facility setup in all the villages. To complement the information technological initiatives, DHAN Foundation has supported the local communities to launch a Community Radio Station – Kalanjiam Samuga Vanoli in the Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu. United Nations Development Programme provided needed technical support. The station has started to function from October 2006. In addition to Radio and ICT based Village Information Centres (Thagavalagam), community video component was also added to maximize the impact.

The community radio presents programmes of 30 – minutes every day. With the collaboration of All India Radio the Community Radio has made arrangement to broadcast selected programmes once in a week for fifteen minutes. These programmes address local information and community needs that revolve around disaster preparedness, livelihoods, local best practices, women and children, health, education and farming.

The DHAN Foundation has formed a team of women volunteers from local community and trains them on video techniques and production. These video programmes are presented to the women during their SHG meetings. The Centre works with the local television cable channels to screen the video products made by the team at fixed time schedules. Apart from this work commercial video documentation assignments are also take up.

*Thagavalagam* village information centers (VIC) have been set up in 13 villages in the block. Every day, information related to weather, potential fish catch
zones and other relevant information is displayed in the information board installed in the villages. The VICs also provide GPS on rent to the fishermen along with potential fishing zone information downloaded from the website to enhance their fish catch. The VIC constantly updates the number of persons with mobile phones in the village. Timely warning alerts, relevant information from the Government departments, and availability of seeds, man power, machineries for sales and rental information are sent as free SMS.

The project was able to provide several types of media based services to 12 different villages in the Union territory of Pondicherry, and furthermore critically consider the advantages and disadvantages of each of these technologies. The technologies provided and assessed include: vhf duplex radios, spread spectrum technology, satellite based internet connectivity, public address systems, and a community newspaper.

The technology provided to these rural communities has directly saved lives. Residents of Nallavadu survived the recent tsunami that devastated the area thanks to technology that established with support from the IRDC NGO. When one of the village residents received a phone call warning about the approaching tsunami, she and her neighbors were able to broadcast the news across the village using a loudspeaker system that had been installed to inform fishermen of the water conditions. The entire village, more than 3,500 individuals were able to evacuate in time to survive the tsunami.

1.7 Media and Women

Women in India are divided into unequal halves; of the 368 million women in India, 278 million reside in rural areas and most of them being illiterate (Census of India, 2001). Many maintain that women’s economic dependence on men impacts their power within the family. According to the report of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), (2002) and the Status of Women Commission (2003), the world cannot eradicate poverty or promote democratic and economically just societies, unless women gained full access in the modern information technology. With increased participation in the modern media women bring not only more income for the family, but also the social inequality is relatively reduced. In
this sense, the media play an important role in the promotion of economy and social status of women. Women are extensively exposed to the mass media, particularly television and radio, which is allowing them to know of the world around them, their rights and opportunities. Efforts have been made by incorporating the media in educating the women regarding these various programmes. Community radio is considered to be an effective tool in promoting women’s empowerment and participation in governance structures. Radio is often the primary source of information for women. It is accessible to local communities, transcends literacy barriers and uses local languages.

Participation and Influence of women in media in the modern time is fascinating. Studies have found that although the overall number of women working in the media has been increasing globally, the top positions of production, administration and publishing are still very male dominated (White, 2009) In most developing countries, despite the problems of poor working conditions, lack of access and training women in the new media are not only contributing to the development of their economic condition, combating poverty, fighting widespread gender disparity but also increased their participation and competitiveness in improving their overall status. By having access to the new media, women explore, broadcast, and contribute to the field of modern media. They also serve as a platform for community building and networking in the media. Though researchers have also pointed out the negative consequences and the great digital divide, and over emphasized the negative impact of media on the role of women in the profession of handling the modern media, certainly their image has been boosted. The significant level of participation and influence of women in the media also has implications for media content: female media professionals are more likely to reflect other women’s needs and perspectives than their male colleagues. The presence of women on the radio, television and in print is more likely to provide positive role models for women and girls to gain the confidence of women as sources and interviewees, and to attract a female audience.

It has been the responsibility of the media to report current events, provide frameworks for interpretation, mobilise citizens with regard to various issues, reproduce predominant culture and society, and entertain (Llanos, 2011). Women
are conspicuous by their presence in the Indian media. They have played a stupendous role in covering the events of 1999’s ‘Kargil War’ and “9/11 event of USA” and thereafter, and Analysing their implications – as correspondents and commentators, editors and anchors, interviewers and hosts of current affairs programmes, especially on some high profile television news channels and in the indigenous English language press. Women played an active role in covering the “communal” blaze in Gujarat. As the media provided on-the-spot report from the internal battle-front, female by-lines were very much in evidence in several newspapers and newsmagazines, and female broadcasters regularly appeared on a number of television news and current affairs programmes, focusing public attention, the sectarian violence and its aftermath.

These examples of women journalists covering conflict tell one side of the story of women in the media. There are obviously many other aspects to the question of the participation and access of women to the media and its impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women.

Media content and portrayal of women in the media is another dimension of the media industry today. Objectively speaking a significant number of women journalists are involved and also successful in magazines and other media. A good deal of women issues are dealt in the modern media with sensitivity and skill. Issues such as women abuse and exploitation, harassment of women at workplace and the trauma of infected women, female infanticide in rural areas find a prominent place in magazines. The magazines and newspapers deal with the issues more in depth compared to television and we find women like Shobhaa De (Indian columnist and novelist, born-1948), and Tavleen Singh (Indian columnist and political writer, born-1950) are considered competent to handle such stories. As per a study there are around 900 women journalists and even in cities like Chennai the number is an impressive 200. Journalism is no more a male domain. This new trend has also led to a change in the portrayal of women in the media in general and newspaper in particular.

1.8 Role of Mass Media in the Promotion of Women’s Life

Women are pivotal in society’s social, cultural, educational programmes. They are the central figure of family life. Most of them are homemakers and
confined primarily to the household activities. Consequently, they have greater leisure time at their disposal. Hence, they use more media than their male counterparts or the career women. Like most profession, in the media too, women have struck out boldly, beating a path, which is both impressive and inspiring. The last five years have seen them pouring out into the mainstream, acquiring hitherto unattainable positions and proving their mettle, be it the print or the television media. In short, women have become indispensable in the field. It is heartening that a wide variety of women’s media initiatives are making a positive impact. Women have been latecomers in the media profession owing to social, religious taboos which operated as social sanctions. The employment of women in media assumes crucial importance at this juncture of our economic development. Besides Independent Public Corporation of Media DD & AIR, the private owners of TV channels with ownership of Terrestrial outlets and satellite up linking facilities in the country itself have flourished. This has brought a boom in employment thereby increasing the percentage of women media professionals.

It will not be out of context to mention here the success of ‘Khabar Lahariya’. A group of eight women belonging to backward class bring out this paper from the Bunderlkhand region. It is noticed that more and more young graduates are joining the journalism degree and diploma courses, with an ambition to make a mark in the profession, almost a proliferation of the electronic media through satellite channels, with the popularity of the FM on the radio and with the growth of the print media, notwithstanding the electronic media, now there is a good scope for absorption of both men and women qualified journalists in various media outlets. Women, young and old, are prepared to weather the risks.

The last twenty years of print media is a story of women’s participation in an area that focuses on the national agenda of great public interest. The print media and cinema expanded the role of media itself by including for discussion ‘development issues’ and interlinking these with political questions. Women directors like Aparna Sen, Sai Paranjpe, Kalpana Lajmi and Nair have made their impact through parallel cinema. They have made an attempt to break away from the main stream cinema and have presented themes on women or the issues concerning common man’s life. These creative women directors have shaped the messages of cinema to highlight
positive images of women. The powerful actresses like Jaya Bachan, Rekha, Shabana Azmi, Revathi, and Radhika have contributed by portraying strong women characters, deviating from normal stereotyped roles.

As elsewhere in India, women play a central role in family, community and social development. However, women often remain invisible and unheard. Women more than men have to balance the complexities of surviving in extreme poverty, yet these women are excluded from discussion because they are often illiterate, they lack confidence and they lack mobility. Mass Media offer the opportunities for direct, interactive communication even by those who lack skills, who are illiterate, lack mobility and have little self-confidence. After the deployment of ICT technology the disadvantaged rural women of the poor coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, where even finishing primary school is a big deal, we notice more than 500 women have been trained in a large number of skills-development and income enhancement vocational programmes. Alongside the ICT training was capacity building, and participants were able to broach taboo subjects such as marriage rights of women, women and civil service and women and higher education. These are covered extensively in the multimedia courseware development by many of the NGOs. As more women benefited, other women, who had not ventured out of their homes and also out of the ghettos come to the ICT centers in large numbers.

In the past women were only considered for household work and were left outside the mainstream of development. In today’s life the scenario has not changed much. But with the advent of ICT and powerful mass media this conservative outlook about women is diminishing gradually. As a result we find more women are employed in various knowledge based industries such as computer-aided designing, graphic designing, composing etc. With this growing number of women employment the job environment is becoming more convenient and friendly for women. The provisions for ladies common room, green room etc. are considered as a necessity these days. This changed scenario indicates a positive attitude towards women employment. Consequently parents are becoming more aware about new media and are interested in sending their daughters to study computer science for better prospects in life even if they have to pay a fortune for their child’s education. The new media is not only creating employment for women but also creating a
chance for them to emerge as entrepreneurs especially in marketing. Many women are encouraged to take initiatives to invest in and they are also improving their competence using as an entrepreneur in different sectors. For example, the housewives are motivated to shift from relatively low-yield traditional ventures, like animal husbandry, into village technology sector by creating micro-enterprises that can both generate individual income and provide whole village phones. Village phones have increased income and savings accumulating among phone owners, mostly women.

1.9 Media Resources and Women

Mass communication is the process of delivering information and ideas to a sizable and diversified audience through the use of media developed for that purpose. The concrete tasks of the media resources are to provide large audience with information, culture and entertainment. They raise the overall level of skills and knowledge of users along with a mixture of entertainment and information contents. The scientific and technological advancements have brought about steady and fast development in the media world. New media are coming up while the old ones are being improved upon and in this process their availability has increased manifold. Women, the reservoir of productive human resources constitutes almost half of the country’s total population. For the home-makers, life revolves around her family and mass media are mainly used for entertainment and relaxation or at times to add value to the homemakers. They make them more responsible towards their society. There are various media used to give the information regarding health, society development, entrepreneurship and various other aspects. The heterogeneous females have different needs, interests, and leisure time and socio economic background. Women’s roles in the family affairs, especially in decision-making, are no longer ignored.

Now women earn for their family by means of mass media and this substantial revenue stream has elevated the women positions in their own households, and the society they belong to. The role models of women who actively participate in the socio-economic development increase self-esteem and self-confidence of other women and therefore encourage them to push for changes in
their own social status and communication technology is not just a technology but an inalienable weapon of women empowerment. In the area of knowledge based culture, women can achieve excellence through proper use of the media resources. For example, the local BSNL and other telecoms have created a ‘phone-culture’ among women by enabling their access to communication tools from which they might otherwise be excluded. They have also shown that poor and largely uneducated women can master the skills and run a small business.

As it is observed in the world today, women are extensively exposed to the mass media, particularly television and now the Internet, which is allowing them to know of the world around them, their rights and new opportunities. These days many NGOs and Government agencies make efforts to educate people regarding various programmes that can help in their empowerment. This approach has been helping women to integrate more fully into economic, political, and social mainstream of the country.

Women in the coastal areas now are acquiring more bargaining power as they are exposed to modern media resources specially World Wide Web through mobile phone, computer and internet. They have become a potential store house of various news and reports. As Women entrepreneurs globally have said that access to information, especially market information, is their first priority in accelerating the growth of their business. We can ameliorate the economic status of women by shrinking information asymmetry through media resources. Traditionally, women have been the incubators and transmitters of knowledge relating to food processing, preservation, and storage, the growing of specific crop, nutrition, and health. Much of the knowledge that women in rural areas possess are scientific. New media in the format has helped organize and transfer this knowledge to outside communities that might benefit from it. This has helped women to empower through codification and dissemination of their indigenous knowledge. For example, the Knowledge Centers set up by M. S. Swaminathan Research Centre in Puducherry and Kaviri poompatinam have developed local databases and local web pages that are relevant to the people and that take into account their daily needs, their culture and their language. The aim of this Foundation is to set up village information shops that enable rural families to access information and communication technologies. The
project trains educated youth, especially women, in rural areas in operating information shops and maintaining a system that generates locally relevant information from generic information. The Swaminathan “Knowledge Centers are like barefoot doctors and the Green Revolution, both of which have delivered and are appropriate to their contexts. The Knowledge Centers in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu have been assisting the Self-Help Groups of the village to establish a transparent database of saving and credit and village youth are being enabled in computer application training and service. All these dreams of the past have come to a reality now. A hub located at Villianur, a small town 13 km west of Puducherry, serves as the value-addition centre. Community ownership of the Village Knowledge Centers and a participatory approach to daily operations are important elements of this project. The villagers are consulted before setting up a Village Knowledge Centre. The volunteers are trained in computer applications and data collection. Generally there are more than two volunteers per centre and the project emphasizes that half of these volunteers be women. This is done with a view to facilitate social and economic empowerment of the rural women and the community in general.

The Muslim women volunteers have made an appreciable impact on their communities by making use of the media resources. In tradition bound village societies, it is not easy for a woman to come forward to take up any responsibility or activity at the village level. Despite such restricting backgrounds, women have taken up this responsibility and are discharging their functions efficiently. They were quick to understand and grasp the concept behind the Centres. The women volunteers realize that this initiative is not only about skill development but social empowerment. They appreciate the fact that they are not just volunteers but role models for the other women in their communities. The communities in general, recognize the services of the women volunteers particularly in the Knowledge Centres like Embalam, Kaliteerthal kuppam and Kizhur. The Embalam Centre is managed entirely by a vibrant group of Muslim women volunteers. Their education level ranges from fifth standard to high school level. Interaction with women volunteers, particularly in the centres at Embalam and Kalitheerthal kuppam clearly revealed that the project has undoubtedly helped them get over their inhibitions and
improve their self-confidence. They have become capable of claiming the benefits of government welfare schemes for their villagers and offering counseling to their friends and relatives in solving and tacking household problems. The self-help groups’ members have attended various training programmes organized by the project with the help of other organizations and institutes. This reflects a dimension of their social empowerment. Economical empowerment of the volunteers has also been possible wherever there has been opportunity for them to provide services like typing applications, taking printout, charging for video games etc.

Women no longer lack in knowledge in fitting themselves in the right places. This positively highlights the influence of the new media. Illiteracy acts as a major barrier to women’s access to technology in many parts of the world. In India, Action Aid’s ‘REFLECT for Information and Communication Technology’s project employs a variety of ‘Forum Theatre’ approaches to break this barrier. Trained theatre artists from the same localities perform at local communities to introduce project elements. Even as they are being entertained, the illiterate women slowly begin to recognize the underlying messages, the potentials and opportunities presented by the new technologies.

It should also be noted that the number of women users of the Knowledge Centers remains low especially when compared to their male counterparts among the Muslim community. Statistics indicate that there is far greater participation by men in the Information and Communication projects than by women. Addressing this imbalance will require gender sensitive policies. Even in the Centres run exclusively by women, the women users are not as many. The volunteers feel that by taking some effective steps, this gap could be narrowed down. It appears that the prevailing social conditions in a few villages do not engender social empowerment of women. Even though there were many college-educated young women in a village, women are unable to make use of the Knowledge Centre facilities due to family and societal restrictions. The fishermen communities expect women even the educated ones, to remain at home, without any social interaction.

In a strange paradox, it is acceptable if these very women go to other towns to sell their fish, as fish is simply considered to be their economic contribution to the
family. Only in the case of other activities like going to knowledge centers, or for any other reason, particularly where men are present, the society imposes rules on the freedom of young women. There is opposition when women take part freely in any village level activities. In order to avoid criticism and ridicule, the young women themselves implicitly follow the societal norms. The internalization of these values has been so strong that women seldom break away from these norms.

Furthermore, it is observed that the younger generation seems keen to break the shackles. A 10th grade student from the same fishing village, offered an innovative solution to the problem of accessibility. “Set a time slot for women”, she said and added; “Women volunteers can actively encourage more women members to utilize the knowledge centres.” When asked how computer education would help married women who stayed home, she said, “They will be a source of inspiration to their children. Computer education will also give them the satisfaction of knowing something useful”.

1.10 Media Coverage of Women

According to many social scientists, in all spheres of life whether for controlling population growth, spread of literacy or improving quality of life for vast masses, women have a crucial role to play. However, women can be expected to play this role when they become conscious of their strength and are not deliberately marginalized by other social factors. In this context, media has an important role to play so as to create awakening in women to achieve their potential and be the prime movers of change in society.

In the following analysis the researcher has analyzed the coverage of women in global media, Indian media and Tamil Media.

1.10.1 Media Coverage of Women by the Global Media

Any discussion on women is normally to be looked from the prism of culture and social set up. It is amazing to note that the modern media has not only boosted the image of women but also challenged the stereotyped understanding of women. The coverage of women in the global media is rather multi-faceted. On the one hand, it portrays women in stereotype roles as submissive; on the other hand they are
projected as aggressive, modern and liberal. Thus in many cases the global media presents the two extreme characters of women regardless of their religion, class and stature.

The findings of the Global Media Project, 1995, the first extensive cross-national, quantitative study of women’s coverage in the media spanning newspapers, radio and television in 71 countries showed men. They were least likely to be news subjects in coverage of politics and government and most likely to make the news in area overwhelmingly male, with men making up to 83 percent of all experts and 86 percent of all spokespersons quoted in the stories. Like health and social issues. Later the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media offered the first ever picture of women in the news media. This was conducted in more than 60 countries, engaging more than 500 media companies to answer detailed questions about the women in their media units and other organisations. This study illustrated to the extent to which women have advanced professionally in media work. The study also identified factors that both contribute to and inhibit gender equality in the media industry.

The International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF), located in Washington, is a network of thousands of women journalists working internationally to elevate the status of women and give more coverage to them in the media. The IWMF has created ground breaking programmes to help women in the media develop practical solutions to the obstacles they face in their careers and lives. This organization also supports more coverage on issues related to women globally and also often forms petition asking international governments to release journalists in captivity and offer protection to journalists in danger.

Furthermore, statistics on the manner in which women are portrayed in the media reflect a dismal story. In 1995 women made up 17% of news subjects; five years later the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which involved teams collecting data across the world, revealed that this figure increased to only 18%. The (GMMP) 2000 also found that women were featured primarily in stories involving entertainment, and received little or no coverage in news stories dealing with politics. Women were photographed twice as often than they were asked for
comment. Thus, “woman” in the media becomes the object, whether this object takes the form of sexual object, or hard-done-by victim (Lewis et al., 2002).

One can agree with the statement that fair gender portrayal in the media should be a professional and ethical aspiration, similar to respect for accuracy, fairness and honesty with regard to the coverage of women in the media (White, 2009). Over all one can say that the coverage of women in the global media is very satisfying particularly in the recent past. However, this is not the end of the road.

1.10.2 Media Coverage of Women by the Indian Media

By and large the media scene in India is that media does not address serious issues about exploitation and unequal treatment of women in different spheres but is keen on reporting sex related incidents as news of atrocities on women. Thus instead of highlighting the exploitation of women they end up becoming one of the reasons in increase of violence as their coverage more often than not tends to glorify the crime against women. The media such as cinema, television and Internet depict women as a humble and docile peace-keeping force of the house. Women are either being portrayed as Sita (Ramayana) or as Kaikeyee (Ramayana) and there seems to be nothing in between the two extreme characters being shown in the social media. Arunhati Roy in one of her interviews commented, “Women’s problems never figure on the front page of a newspaper unless it is a gruesome murder or a case of rape”. Again Mrs. Medha Patkar the Indian social activist and social reformer remarked that “Newspapers even on women’s page do not usually address relevant issues for women empowerment but reporting is concerned with beauty tips, recipes, fashion syndrome etc.”

According to Shabana Azmi the noted film actor and social activist, “Newspapers cover women’s problems drawing the attention of policymakers to issues requiring immediate attention such as the adverse sex ratio, infant and maternal mortality, crime against women and the effects of poverty on women and their families. But this coverage is very limited with the rest of the space occupied by cinema actresses, models, video jockeys and the rich women and their hobbies”. Many of the women’s magazines are devoted to fashion, glamour, beauty aids, weight-reduction, cookery and how to sharpen ‘feminine instincts’ to keep men and
their in-laws happy. There are fewer articles on career opportunities, health awareness, entrepreneurship, legal-aid, counseling services, childcare services and financial management. However, it is true that of late the scenario has been changing and challenging. A study in this regard was conducted in Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. Two regional newspapers and two English newspapers were selected for the study. According to the findings prominent newspapers only publish 5% of women related issues and 8 are published on the main page and the remaining is placed inside. The study showed no importance is given to development issues of women. In another study by the National Commission for Women recommended amendment in the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition Act), 1986. For several centuries, women in India have been socially and economically handicapped. They have been deprived of equal participation in the socio-economic activities of the nation.

More recently, a mini-survey of the Bangalore editions of six English language newspapers during the first ten days of March 2005 revealed both sides of the gender covering coin. The survey findings confirm that gender awareness has yet to be integrated into ‘mainstream’, ‘hard-news’ media coverage. It also revealed the overwhelming influence of commercialism, the presence of lifestyle celebrity journalism and blending of news with entertainment in much of the media today.

Much water has flown down the Ganges, in the history of media and the role of women in India one cannot deny the fact that media is not just provocative but also becoming positive. The Constitution of India recognizes women as a class by itself and permits enactment of laws and reservations favoring them. Several articles in our Constitution make express provision for affirmative actions in favour of women. Today the media lays a foundation for securing equal opportunity to women in all walks of life, including education, employment and participation. In this connection it is appropriate to refer to the recommendations made by the Joshi Committee on the positive coverage of women on Doordarshan. The Committee proposed that the improvement of women’s conditions, status and image have changed drastically and must be carried out in all media channels. A large proportion of the research findings are published in major news outlets today. In fact, despite the challenges posed by the modern society women have made entries
into areas which were once treated as male dominated bastions. It is heartening to note that a wide variety of women’s media initiatives are making positive impact.

1.10.3 Media Coverage of Women in Tamil Media

Media plays a crucial and influential role in the social, political and cultural areas of Tamil Nadu. As one unravels the genesis of Tamil Nadu’s social, political and cultural history the use and impact of media for disseminating public opinions is highly powerful. The power of mass media in Tamil Nadu hails from the olden tradition of koothu (street theatre). Gradually this medium developed into pantomime, song and dance in the streets. Soon the script writers and organizers became dramatists, and influential opinion makers. Given the political chicanery and greasy nature of Tamil Nadu’s political cape, the state for over two decades has been ruled by the emperors of Tamil media who have moulded and influenced the public opinion. In Tamil Nadu Television and Cinema are the main powerful instruments of the media by political masters for overwhelming influence over the mass. According to reports 30 and more Tamil entertainment and news channels are eating into a Rs. 1000 crore advertisements. Today every political party runs a TV channel and attempts to indoctrinate their political agenda on common people. The popular Sun TV has as many as five independent channels for their telecasting and unfortunately not one channel is dedicated to the cause of women. Except a few Televisions most of them do not care to cover the issues of women. If they telecast it is only for the commercial or ‘hard- news’. Women’s issues in the Tamil Media are still, by and large, seen as narrow niche issues and covered as such as dramatic or lurid cases of violence or discrimination and continue to receive more coverage than other equally important issues. No one can deny the fact that superficiality, sensationalism and insensitivity frequently mark such coverage while serious coverage of significance to the cultural and empowerment are often lost in the blanket coverage accorded to trivial pursuits.

Despite changes in women’s actual roles they are still portrayed by the media in restrictive ways that it shows them in terms of their traditional role as submissive and dependent wives/mothers whose functions are to cook and to give birth to children. Today a number of Tamil women are totally engaged in various income
generating activities to supplement their husband’s income but these working women are portrayed by the media as deviant women and those that are engaged in formal employment are expected to work as secretaries, nurses or teachers. One probable cause of poor portrayal of women in the media could be that there are less female in media field than male and therefore it is difficult to push for the different manner in which reports about women are positive in the media.

Following the success of Sun-TV’s political muscle, rival All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) founded its own Jaya channel in 1999. Raj TV which was reported to have had a tough time setting up operations in Tamil Nadu and had to contend with Sun TV muscle: the neutral Vijay TV which tied up with Star News had to contend with the formidable reach and political power from grassroots to the central government. The latest is Desiya Murppokku Dravida Kazhagam’s (DMDK) Captain TV launched in 2010 (named after Vijayakanth, after the title of the red-eyed Rambo of Tamil cinema’s eponymous character Captain Prabhakaran in 1991) which hasn’t posed much of a threat to the Dravida Munnetra Khazhagam (DMK) or Anna Dravida Munnetra Khazhagam (ADMK’s) channels. Interestingly all these private channels have become more political and very less educative or empowering women in Tamil Nadu.

On the contrary one can note that in Tamil Nadu there are as many as Tamil periodicals dedicated to the cause of women. Many newspapers also dedicate a special column for women related issues.

These periodicals and newspapers have been publishing issues related to women’s health once in a week. It includes major threatening women’s illnesses, health tips, nutritional diet pattern and cover stories about women’s health on cultural basis. The monthly journals such as Avall, Mangai, Rajam, Sakthi, Mangaiyar Malar, Thozhi, Snehithi, Ladies’ special and Devi allot a specific portion for women’s health. This is very much helpful to women who can gain knowledge towards health by reading the experts view our various health issues.

1.11 Profile of Cuddalore District

A fishing village is usually located near a fishing ground, with an economy based on catching fish and harvesting seafood. The continents and islands around the
world have coastlines totaling around 356,000 kilometers (221,000 mi). From
Neolithic times, these coastlines, as well as the shorelines of inland lakes and the
banks of rivers, have been punctuated with fishing villages. Most surviving fishing
villages are traditional.

The fishing community in Cuddalore is one among the many groups of
fisher-folk in the country. Scanty ethnographic and allied information on this group
is available in travelogues and in district gazetteers.

The town of Cuddalore is one of the largest district headquarters of Tamil
Nadu, Southern India. It lies 25 kilometers south of Puducherry on the coast of the
Bay of Bengal. Cuddalore has two parts: the “Old Town” (OT) and the “New Town”
(Thirupathiri puliyur) separated by the Gedilam River. From 1748 to 1752,
Cuddalore was the capital of the English Possessions on the Coromandel Coast.
Prior to English control, Cuddalore was called “Koodalur” meaning “confluence” in
Tamil. It is the place where the Pennaiyar, Kedilam and Paravanar rivers join.

1.11.1 Location and Area

The Cuddalore district historically consisted of “Chola Naadu” and “Nadu
Naadu”. The name Nadu Naadu meaning “middle country”, may originate from its
location between Chola Nadu and “Thondai Mandalam”; or between the “Pallava
Kingdom” and the “Chola Kingdom”; or between central territories and the ocean.

From ancient times, the old town has been a seaport. Through the centuries,
Cuddalore has been subject to a number of foreign powers including the
Netherlands, Portugal, France and more recently, the British. In the 1600s, the
French and English came to Cuddalore for trade and business. The French
established a settlement at Puducherry and the British at Cuddalore. The French and
English, while engaged in the Seven Year’s War, fought the naval “Battle at
Cuddalore” on April 29, 1758. It was an indecisive battle between a British
squadron, under Vice-Admiral George Pocock and a French squadron, under
Compete D’Ache’. British casualties amounted to 29 dead and 89 wounded, while
France lost about 600 men. From 1789 to 1794, there was further unrest in
Cuddalore due to the War of American Independence and the Second Anglo-Mysore
War culminating in the siege of Cuddalore after which the town was returned to
Britain as part of a peace treaty. Some streets in Cuddalore retain British names such as Clive Street, Wellington Street, Lawrence Road and Imperial Road.

According to Census of India 2011, Cuddalore district had a population of 2,605,914 of which male and female were 1,311,697 and 1,294,217 respectively. In 2001 census, Cuddalore had a population of 2,285,395 of which males were 1,150,908 and the remaining 1,134,487 were females.

The initial provisional data released by Census India 2011, shows that density of Cuddalore district for 2011 is 704 people per km.

Average literacy rate of Cuddalore in 2011 were 78.04 compared to 71.01 of 2001. Male and female literacy were 85.93 and 70.14 respectively. Total literate in Cuddalore District were 1,815,281 of which male and female were 1,000,322 and 814,959 respectively.

With regards to Sex Ratio in Cuddalore, it stood at 987 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 986. The national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate.

During the Mughal period, Cuddalore Old Town was called “Islamabad”. It remains a predominantly Islamic area. It hosts one of the oldest and biggest mosques in south India. The mosque and housing in Cuddalore Old Town are built in the Persian style. In 1866, the Cuddalore municipal offices moved to Manjal Nagar. After this, the terms “Old Town” and “New Town” were coined. The research was carried out in this area.

Though the community practices an extended family system normally, there are a few instances of nuclear families too. The earning husband is invested with powers on larger issues like marriage, rituals and rites, and he enjoys the greatest control in the purchase of costly things. The wife, in her husband’s absence runs the family, does the daily purchases and saving a little. She has to look to her husband’s decision on major items of expenditure.

Adequate housing facilities are not available for the growing population. Sons staying with parents are very common, because they have neither the land for housing nor the facilities to set out to sea independently. On the demise of a man, his
fishing equipment is distributed among his sons, who then run their separate families in the same precincts. While setting out for fishing on a long trip offshore the young ones normally join their uncles instead with the father of the family to team up for fishing. For it is believed that if any calamity occurs, either the father or the son is saved.

The people of Cuddalore coastal area live in predominantly single caste hamlets. In fact, they are attached to a village, yet there are the so called the *kuppam* of different castes and hence with different economic activities from the main village. Fishermen hamlets appear to be socially separate from others, but they do have trade and money transactions links with the other people. Panchayat system in fishing villages seems to be an integral part of the social life of fisher folk.

Leading Tamil, English and other regional languages newspapers are available in Cuddalore. English dailies include the *Deccan Chronicle, The New Indian Express* and *The Hindu*. The Tamil daily, *Dina Thanthi* has a separate edition for Cuddalore. Other Tamil dailies such as *Dina Malar, Dina Karan*, *Dina Mani* and *Maalai Malar* are also available. Cuddalore falls under the “Tamil Nadu Telecom” circle. A station of “All India Radio” is located in nearby Puducherry. The town also has several Local TV Channels. List of leading Mobile networks namely Aircel, Airtel, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Vodafone, Reliance, Tata Indicom, Tata Docomo, Microsoft Transaction Server (MTS) and Interest Determination Exploration and Assessment (IDEA) are also available in Cuddalore district.

The Cuddalore Port operates at the confluence of the Gadilam River and the Paravanar River. Other ports under construction in the area are: Thiruchopuram port Silambimangalam port Parangipettai port

Cuddalore district has 44014 marine fishing folk living in the Coromandel Coast line. There are two major and 26 minor fish landing centres. Fishing is the most obvious activity along the coast and is the major livelihood of the Tsunami affected coastal communities in Cuddalore district. About 90 percent of the population in these coastal villages is engaged in fishing and fish related activities and the remaining 10 percent are engaged in agriculture, livestock and micro enterprises.
The fishing unit is composed of a boat and fishing gear. There are four types of fishing units used in Cuddalore viz.

1. Catamaran with sails and small nets,
2. Catamaran with motor and nets,
3. FRP boat with motor and nets and,
4. Mechanized boats.

Catamaran is the traditional boat and is essentially a sailing vessel. Fiberglass Reinforced Plywood (FRP) boats are made of reinforced fiber-glass requires large harbor to land or has to be anchored at sea. Fishermen use out-board motors that can be fitted and removed easily. They are small and light diesel motors that have long shaft with propeller attached to them. These long tails are fitted on a metal bracket at the end of the Catamaran or FRP boat. There is a swiveling system that allows the shaft to be rotated horizontally for navigation and vertically for removing out of water.

The fishermen make use of the anglers at sea. The anglers have their own way of predicting and forecasting rains. First, they are aware of the months of rains in a year. They predict and foretell rains based on mainly movement of the clouds, color of the clouds direction and the intensity of winds. The forecasting of rains help them to plan their fishing operations, time of fishing accessibility to fishing grounds, etc. The anglers also predict the following:

- Lightning at northeast will bring rains,
- If there is lightning in the east and the west alternately, it may rain.

The fishermen while at sea for fishing observe a calm area of about ½ sq. km, which according to them appears at the junction of two winds flowing from different directions. In this calm area, insects like Dragon fly, Thumb appears, and dust is very common in this area. This climate change is significant and is a regular feature at sea.

In the absence of winds, vessels with sails normally run in the sea with current directions. At that time, ripples are seen as a mount by anglers at far off places. The fishermen making use of this feature predict winds and navigate the
vessels. The fishermen start whistling when intensity of winds increases as they predicted earlier. This knowledge of predicting winds helps the anglers to safely sail the vessel and return from the sea at a shorter time after their fishing.

When the fishermen bring back the catch of fishes, there is a group of people who used to go out to sell this fish in the market places, houses and nearby villages. From the earning they get from selling fish, they run their daily household activities.

According to the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), from the 756,391 Fisher folk involved in fishing related activities in India, approximately 48% are women, with 152,692 of them engaged in marketing of fish, compared to 54,670 men (DAHD, 2005). Women in fishing areas of Cuddalore contribute a great deal to the fishing economy, either directly by harvesting, processing and marketing, or indirectly by providing vital extra income, food crops and host of supporting activities that ensure the well-being of the family. Some believe that women are reputed to bring bad luck and are not allowed on boats. Nevertheless women work alongside men in fishing industry. From the moment the boats land, small-scale fisherwomen tend to dominate activities. They help empty the nets and sort the catch, clean and sell the fresh fish on the beach and they handle all the processing, which can be smoking, salting, drying, fermenting or a combination of these. Some women buy fish from boats at beach and from then on manage their own sales. Fish auctioning is a highly profitable business as an auctioning woman takes a share of fish from every basket she auctions – changing both the owner and the purchaser. The majority of the auctioning women give loans to boat owners in return for the auctioning rights to boat catches or to the crew members for ensured supply. When the fish is sold, the women become buyers of staples and vegetables for resale in their villages, thus performing a function as valuable for their own community as is their supply of fish for sale to other areas. In most areas, women make and repair items used by the fishermen, particularly nets, traps, ropes, baskets, packing materials, salt, etc.

As men are busy fishing and spend most of the time in sea, girls are well-educated in this community. However, this has not raised the status of women in this society. The practice of dowry is a crippling paralysis in the society. Many parents
have to pay from Rs. 2, 00,000 to 4, 00,000 to the bridegroom at the time of wedding. This evil has affected many women who are forced to remain unmarried. Alongside we can also see many widows in this community, owing to the death of husbands in the sea.

Micro Finance is considered as one of the effective ways in the Restoration of Livelihood to marginal and vulnerable sections affected by Tsunami. The main concept of the revolving fund is to provide subsidy for the Self-Help Groups with the rate of interest of 8.5 to 9.0 percent. The purpose of the revolving fund is to;

a) Strengthen the group
b) Purchase of raw materials and marketing
c) Infrastructure support for marketing activities
d) Internal lending to individual members
e) Inculcate habit of repayment of loans.

It is stated that there are 732 SHGs are functioning effectively in the Coastal areas of Cuddalore, where 503 SHG were started after tsunami. Totally 13,316 members are involved in Self-Help Group activities effectively. The District Administration has provided the sum of Rs. 64.80 lakhs for 648 groups. The major activities carried out by these SHG in tsunami affected areas are Fish Trading, Grocery shops, vegetable cultivation, manufacturing of sanitary napkins, bakery, tailoring, and masonry work. Some of the trainings organized for the SHGs are solar fish drying technology, fish pickles production, flattening of crabs and lobsters and candle making. The total population of Cuddalore according to 2001 census is 22, 85,395. The length of coastal line is 57.5 km. the number of coastal blocks are 3. There are 3 landing centers spread over the coastal area. In all these there are 13769 fishermen engaged in fishing. No. of Sea port: 1

Cuddalore district is divided by two Taluks: Chidambaram and Cuddalore. Chidambaram has 22 fishing villages and Cuddalore has 20 fishing villages out of the 42 villages the researcher has chosen 13 fishing villages for the purpose of research. Those fishing villages from Chidambaram and Cuddalore in details are given below in Table-4 and 5.
### 1.11.2 Status of Fishing Families in Chidambaram Taluk

**Table-1.4**

*Status of Fishing Families in Chidambaram Taluk*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Name of the village</th>
<th>Fishermen families</th>
<th>BPL families</th>
<th>Fisher folk population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C.Pudupettai</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>1,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chinavaikal</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indranagar</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kalaignarnagarkillai</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Killai</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Madavappallam</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Marine Fisheries Census 2010, Tamil Nadu, Part II, No.4)

### 1.11.3 Status of Fishing Families in Cuddalore Taluk

**Table-1.5**

*Status of Fishing Families in Cuddalore Taluk*

|  | Akkairaikori  | 720 | 720 | 2,502 |
|  | Cuddalore port | 617 | 536 | 3,313 |
| 3 | Nallavadu      | 135 | 135 | 505   |
| 4 | Rajapettai     | 362 | 361 | 1,460 |
| 5 | Singarathoppu  | 1,050 | 990 | 4,435 |
| 6 | Sonankuppam    | 712 | 712 | 2,809 |
| 7 | Sothikuppam    | 441 | 441 | 1,612 |

(Marine Fisheries Census 2010, Tamil Nadu, Part II, No.4)

### 1.12 Statement of the Problem

The reasons for choosing to venture into a research on, *Reach, Access and Utilization of Media Resources by Women Related Fishing in Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu* are the following. First of all, Cuddalore district has been one of the worst affected areas of all the districts of Tamil Nadu in the recent past, with the impact of tsunami 2004, cyclone Thane in 2011 and cyclone Neelam in 2012, left a devastating impact on the coastal communities and their activities, particularly fishing. Assessment of multi-hazard vulnerability along the Cuddalore coast suggests that river systems act as the flooding corridors that carry larger and longer
inter-land inundation. Studies carried out in the Cuddalore region of South India reveal that this low lying coastal zone has been under red-alert for several years during the time of cyclone and storm. The fifty one tsunami affected villages in Cuddalore district are geographically removed from urbanization. Obviously, this has in turn affected their livelihood to a great extent.

Secondly, fisher folk of this area belong to an economically and socially backward community. In majority of the cases family and social problems and the lack of social participation have prevented them from actively involving in community organizations and thus deriving benefits. Perhaps due to the lower literacy levels among the fisher folk, alcoholism, school dropouts among children, matrimonial alliance problems, under-employment and dowry are very high. This fishing community is also a kind of sociologically closed community that does not broach interaction even with neighboring communities except for their trade.

Thirdly, the women in general despite the slow but emerging recognition of their silent contribution to the development of the nation still face stumbling blocks that makes their cry reverberated around the world. According to a United Nation’s report women perform 2/3 of the world’s work, receive only 10% of the world’s income and own only 1% of the total assets. The transformation of fisheries sector, mainly brought by mechanization, has engendered multi-faceted changes in the role of fisherwomen.

In Cuddalore the coastal women play a major role in fish marketing in small scale trading, value addition, and aquaculture practices. They suffer the double burden of being women in traditional and highly prescriptive society and of being engaged in a form of employment, which is considered to be suitable only for aged women and widows. Still many constraints including occupational segregation and wage discrimination between men and women are noticed among fishing community of Cuddalore. Furthermore, the situation of fisherwomen is all the more compounded by widespread indebtedness and the fact that the marketing of fish is considered a very low status occupation for both cultural and practical reasons. Women related to fishing in this area are not well educated and socially ostracized on various counts.
Fourthly, against this backdrop the researcher has chosen media resources as a modern potential technology that can penetrate strongly into the social, economic and the cultural life of the women related to fishing in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. Media persuade, encourage, or educate the target audience to adopt an attitude and participate in actualizing a development plan or goal. Media can play a major role to educate and empower the target group in social awareness economic development, creation of opportunities for realization of human potentialities, mitigate the ill effects of hazards of the fishing trade, promote gender sensitivity and to handle natural disasters. A comprehensive analysis of the overall situation by the media on the one hand would help the policy makers for appropriate planning and on the other hand equip the coastal people with adequate management of vulnerable situation. This would result in significant risk reduction besides improving the social economic situation of the community for the overall development of the coastal people.

Finally, it has been observed that hardly any study has been conducted among the fisher folk in Cuddalore coastal area. In spite of the significant role played by women in the fishery sector, there is a lot of gap in the availability of gender specific data on fisherwomen of Cuddalore pertaining to their social, economic and cultural profile, wage disparities, occupational hazards and the use, access and utility of social media to evolve a proportionate specification of their role in the fishing sector. Despite the presence of many community organisations and NGOs the issues pertaining to fisherwomen still remain to be influenced by the new media and its usefulness. Hence, this study has chosen to focus on the women in Cuddalore coastal area.