



Mr. Veerappan

Kalaignar Nagar, Pichavaram,
Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu



M.S. Swaminathan Centenary Fisheries Fair

Fish for All and Ever: A Pathway Towards Biohappiness

February 26–27, 2026

Biohappiness Champions On The Ground

Mr. Veerappan once depended on banned practices like snake catching and rat hunting, leaving his family vulnerable. Through MSSRF's Joint Mangrove Management Programme, he gained stable housing, fishing support, and dignified livelihood options. Crab fattening became a turning point, enabling him to educate his three children. Over the past 25 years, he has become a dedicated conservationist—releasing over 1,000 egg-bearing crabs and planting more than 500 mangrove saplings across Pichavaram and Muthupettai. Today, he mentors youth and embodies Professor M.S. Swaminathan's Biohappiness philosophy, where livelihoods and ecology thrive together.





Ms. Pechiyammal

Vedhalai, Ramanathapuram District,
Tamil Nadu



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Ms. Pechiyammal, a fisherwoman and SHG leader, plays a key role in the ghost gear management in Gulf of Mannar. With the support from MSSRF and HCL Foundation she trained in shoreline clean-up and safe retrieval of marine debris, she now leads the Neithal SHG-run Ghost Gear Segregation Centre, coordinating collection, sorting, and handling of abandoned nets. Her leadership has made Vedhalai a model for community-led marine conservation, while enabling SHG members to earn additional income. She continues to inspire families and volunteers to keep their beaches clean and protect marine ecosystems.





Mr. Murukeshan

Elamkunnappuzha, Ernakulam District,
Kerala



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Known as the “Mangrove Man of Vypin,” Mr. Murukeshan turned the loss of mangroves in his childhood into a lifelong mission. With support from the Forest Department and MSSRF, he established a mangrove nursery at home and became a key resource person for restoration efforts. Between 2023 and 2025, he raised over 10,000 saplings and planted nearly 9,000 across vulnerable coastal zones. Through collaborations with institutions, he trains volunteers and motivates youth, demonstrating how community leadership can revive coastal ecosystems.





Mrs. Nagaveni

Uttara Kannada District,
Karnataka



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When her husband became paralysed, Mrs. Nagaveni adopted cage fish farming with guidance from MSSRF, the Kanara Cage Fish FPO, and PMMSY subsidies. Starting with one cage, she achieved high success and now operates six cages, earning ₹4–5 lakhs annually. Her achievements have inspired over 15 women to take up cage farming. As a Director of the FPO, she now supports others to access training and build stable incomes. Her journey shows how resilience and support systems can rebuild livelihoods.





Mr. Altrin

Thangachimadam,
Ramanathapuram District,
Tamil Nadu



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Mr. Altrin founded FEED Trust in 2009 to create livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities. With MSSRF's mentorship, he built a successful seafood value-addition enterprise producing prawn, fish, and squid pickles under the brand Idhaya, along with diversified products. Today, FEED Trust operates a self-sustained processing unit providing stable income to 18 persons with disabilities. His work demonstrates how inclusive entrepreneurship can transform lives and create dignified opportunities.





Mrs. Kalaiselvi

Muzhukuthurai, Cuddalore District,
Tamil Nadu



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Widowed and surviving on irregular fish vending, Mrs. Kalaiselvi rebuilt her livelihood through MSSRF support receiving training in hygienic fish handling, an insulated box, and digital literacy through the Women Connect Challenge. These skills improved her income, confidence, and market presence. In 2025, she represented Tamil Nadu fisherwomen at Dialogue NEXT in New Delhi. Today, she is an SHG leader and a national voice for fisherwomen's concerns, showing how digital empowerment can change lives.





Mr. Rushi Behera

Purunabandha Village, Ganjam District,
Odisha



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For years, Mr. Rushi Behera faced fines and uncertainty due to accidental entry into Olive Ridley No Fishing Zones. In 2021, he adopted the Fisher Friend Mobile Application (FFMA), which provides real-time alerts and weather updates. This enabled him to avoid restricted zones, reduce losses, and plan safer fishing trips. He has since encouraged 40–50 fishers to adopt FFMA for responsible fishing. His experience shows how digital information can protect both marine life and livelihoods.





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Starting as a community worker after the 2004 tsunami, Mrs. Sharmila Devi emerged as a strong leader through continuous engagement with MSSRF. Training in fish handling, dry fish value addition, and digital literacy helped her move towards organised enterprise. She now chairs the Vetripaavai Fisherwomen Producer Company with nearly 200 members, guiding women towards sustainable and collective livelihoods.

Mrs. Sharmila Devi

Vanagiri, Mayiladuthurai District,
Tamil Nadu





Ms. Christinal

Thangachimadam,
Ramanathapuram District,
Tamil Nadu



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Ms. Christinal transformed her uncertain livelihood under MSSRF's Ghost Gear Programme and WWF-supported training. After mastering upcycling, she became a Trainer of Trainers and has trained over 120 fisherwomen. Today, she leads the Samudra Women Group, producing eco-friendly products from discarded nets and contributing to the circular blue economy. Her journey highlights how women can become environmental leaders when **given skills and support.**





Mr. Ashokan

Kuzhupilly Village, Kerala



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A Pokkali farmer and retired engineer, Mr. Ashokan revived the traditional rice–fish farming system with MSSRF’s technical support. He introduced innovations such as drone-assisted sowing, protective netting, and drip irrigation. His integrated model combines rice, fish, prawns, and ducks, enhancing soil health and biodiversity. As President of the Pokkali Farmers’ Association, he mobilises youth and helped restore 60 hectares under collective cultivation.





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After surviving a severe storm in 2003, Mr. Sridhar adopted MSSRF's Ocean State Forecast alerts and later FFMA. Real-time weather, PFZ advisories, and cyclone alerts enabled him to fish safely, reduce fuel costs, and grow his income. He now owns three boats, employs 20 workers, and promotes digital tools among fishers. His journey shows how science can turn high-risk fishing into safer, informed livelihoods.

Mr. Kandala Sridhar

Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh





Mrs. Akilarasi

Panithittu village, Puducherry



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Akilarasi grew from a homemaker into a community knowledge leader through the Village Knowledge Centre of the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. Joining in 2007 with no computer skills, she gained digital expertise through training and has since supported fishers with weather advisories and helped villagers access schemes and services. Recognized with the National Virtual Academy Fellowship, she is now a trusted knowledge resource in her community.





Mr. Senthilvel

Karuvi, Mayiladuthurai District,
Tamil Nadu



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Mr. Senthilvel shifted from uncertain farming to a stable integrated system with MSSRF's support. By combining aquaculture, agriculture, poultry, and tree farming, he now earns steady income from regular fish harvests and diversified farm activities. His model farm inspires neighbouring farmers and demonstrates how integrated approaches build resilience and long-term livelihood security.





Dr. Mohanraj

Panayadikuppam, Puducherry



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Dr. Mohanraj transformed from a Tamil Literature scholar into a successful aquaculture entrepreneur with support from the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. Starting with one acre in 2008, he adopted scientific farming practices and expanded his enterprise. As a Board Director of the Bharathidasan Freshwater Fish Farmers Producer Company Limited, he strengthened his leadership and market linkages. His increased production, income, and demonstration farm now inspire other farmers to adopt science-based aquaculture.

