



Fisher Friend

Helping to Save Lives and Improve Incomes of Fishermen

Generations of fishermen in India's coastal regions have practiced and perfected their craft for years. However, with changing environmental conditions after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and its devastating impact, a new generation of fishermen are using wireless technology to earn their livelihoods in a safer and more profitable manner. The Fisher Friend mobile application provides critical information about weather and ocean conditions up to 100 kilometers (about 62 miles) from shore, including disaster alerts, Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ) and current market prices of fish, helping the fishermen improve their catch and their incomes.

Challenge

- For generations, fishermen in India's coastal communities earned their livelihood by relying on their traditional knowledge of the sea and fishing grounds.
- The devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami changed the sea's conditions, making the fisherfolk's traditional knowledge obsolete.
- Fishermen have difficulty judging when it is safe to venture out to sea and sometimes have trouble finding the best places to fish.
- The International Border Line between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka runs through the ocean close to the coast of Tamil Nadu and is not marked, making it possible for fishermen to accidentally cross the line and face penalties under Sri Lankan law.

INDIA

2018 Statistics*



Solution

- Fisher Friend mobile application provides comprehensive information on ocean conditions such as wind speed, wind direction and wave height along with early warning information on disasters like cyclones, high waves and heavy rainfall. Fishermen use this information to determine when it is safe to go to sea and which type of fishing gear they should take with them.
- The mobile app leverages the smartphone's GPS feature to map the coordinates of PFZ Advisories, provided by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, and chart a course to the PFZ and then back to their harbor locations.
- Fishermen use the GPS feature of the mobile app to communicate their location to the coast guard when stranded at sea.
- The mobile app alerts the fishermen of Tamil Nadu when they're approaching the international border of Sri Lanka, enabling them to change course and avoid crossing the border.
- Fishermen also use the mobile app to obtain current market prices, enabling them to negotiate the best price for their catch.
- Usage of the mobile app is tracked through Google Analytics to provide information about the services deemed most useful by fishermen, which enables customization for each fishing community.

*Sources: CIA World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>); Mobile penetration data provided by Ovum World Cellular Information Service and based on market intelligence.

Impact



Over 16,000 Users

The Fisher Friend program was launched in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and has now scaled to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal. More than 16,000 fishermen from these states have used the mobile app.



GPS Navigation

The fishermen find the GPS capabilities of the mobile app and the smartphone useful to navigate to PFZ coordinates and back to their harbor locations.



More Than 40 Rescues to Date

Fisher Friend has helped in the rescue of more than 40 fishermen who were caught in bad weather conditions. They used the mobile app to communicate their GPS location to the coast guard.



Avoiding Dangerous Waters

Many fishermen have saved their boats' fishing gear and avoided harm to themselves by avoiding dangerous sea conditions based on advisories of wind speeds and wave heights provided by the mobile app.



Increased Incomes

Fishermen have improved their incomes by over Rs. 10,000 (US\$ 150) on average when they followed the Potential Fishing Zone advisory provided through the application.

Program Stakeholders



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July 24, 2018

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