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Theme: Special Sessions

Session: WeG1 - Post-tsunami damage assessment and rehabilitation 1

Title: **When "fish" came from the land side: Fisher responses to tsunami relief efforts in South India**

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Abstract: To the surprise of government as well as NGOs, village-level caste organizations - or panchayats - played a significant role in the post-tsunami relief effort to fishermen in Tamil Nadu, India. This paper discusses the pro-active role of caste panchayats in relief from the perspective of social resilience, that is frequently argued to be of importance for disaster management. It presents panchayat action as an expression of collective agency, that has a long tradition in the fishing villages of the region. Comparing the reactions of caste panchayats to the post-tsunami situation with their performance in other instances of collective need, it finally considers their future role in fields such as fisheries management.