

Management of Marine Fishing Industry: an analysis in harvesting & processing, U. K. Srivastava, M. Dharma Reddy & V. K. Gupta, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1982, pp. 235, Rs. 65.00

The Centre for Management in Agriculture (CMA) of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, has earned a reputation on their publications of research findings. The book under review is the 80th Monograph of the CMA and is an example of an exhaustive study. The research was funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, with a view to discovering the main issues in the management of marine fishing in India. The book is mainly based on the information on the State of Gujarat, a substantial part of which was generated by the authors themselves through sample surveys conducted on the Veraval zone of the State. We should mention that Gujarat accounts for 10% of the total value of catch of marine fish in India and that, within Gujarat, marine fishing is most prominently developed in the Veraval zone.

As mentioned above the book provides information on all stages of the economy from catch through processing to marketing of marine fishes. Apart from the standard management issues like cash flow, capital, output, variety of products that the authors examined, the utility of the book lies in their success in establishing the pattern of relationship obtaining between the diverse institutions and groups of workforces engaged in this sub-sector of the economy. Consequently,

some of the paradoxes within our public policies have been identified.

If we look upon fish purely as a source of protein, we may feel interested to know what prospects marine fishing can offer to us. If, on the other hand, we are sensitive to the question of providing economic opportunities to the backward sections of our society, then marine fishing should also interest us on the consideration that some such sections of our people are traditionally engaged in this area. The recent declaration on the 200-mile exclusive economic zone has decidedly stimulated our interests in futurism. To all such people, this book will appear useful and interesting. Possibly, for all such reasons, the desire to develop the fishing economy has been consistently reflected in all our five-year plans since independence. Yet, we have hardly achieved any growth in this sphere. The reason may be that it is not easy to exercise option in this regard. I have liked this book mainly because it has helped me to realise the problem fairly comprehensively.

Take, for example, the options available for augmenting catch. These range from manually operated crafts to motorised trawlers and from trap-nets to drag-nets. In Gujarat all such crafts are in use. The authors have identified about 250 types of net in use. We may not forget that these diverse gears require different formats of organisation of harvesting, into which not all segments of the society can get easy admission. The more sophisticated and capital intensive the gears are, the larger is the size of catch and the

more remote these appear for adoption by the poorer segments of our society. With the entry of fish as an item in foreign trade, the formally organised large business firms with capital intensive technology have penetrated into the domain that was earlier exclusively available to the informally organised production-groups. Both the forms of organisation of production now operate over the same area, sustain the inevitable conflicts of interests and cause upsets within the social process of development. To amend the situation, we need public policies.

Between 1972 and 1977, for example, the number of trawlers fitted with gill-nets or drag-nets has been increasing significantly. Naturally, the informal sector had to respond to this situation, purely in the interest of covering larger chunks of the fishing ground, by fixing out-board motors (OBM) to their traditional dug-out canoes. One needs money to do this. It is interesting to note that for the gill-netters, trawlers and trawler-cum-gill-netters, loan has come primarily from the Gujarat State Financial Corporation and the Department of Fisheries of the Gujarat State Government. The OBMs have had to depend primarily on the private money-lenders. Most frequently, these private money-lenders are also the major fish-merchants, who require the borrowers to keep their boats in bond. The authors have observed that such bondage leads to realisation of lower unit-value of the catch by the boat owners (operators). Poor rate of repayment of loans follows, which is then seen as a reason to justify the observed reluctance of the formal financial institutions to provide loans to the OBM owners. However, this is only one facet of the paradox that we create through public policies.

The terms of loans fixed by the financial institutions are such as to make all the borro-

wers viable, irrespective of the type of boat used, if only the expected catch is normalised. However, the year to year variation in the quantity of catch is so high that even the big-harvesters are unable to recover their costs in all years. In short, the terms of loan vests all the risks upon the borrower. No wonder that the authors observed that, amongst the samples examined, the majority of the trawlers, trawler-cum-gill-netters and the OBM boats were bonded. Even on the assumption of a normalised expected catch, the trawler-cum-gill-netters are sure to secure the highest net income, while the lowest will come to the OBM operators. We may assume that the public policy is to encourage an enlargement of the scale of operation and not to take care of the problems of social transformation.

The above assumption gets confirmed when we look at marketing of fish. Quite a number of households have been organised into co-operatives. But only a few of these cooperatives sell fish. The marketing system is almost wholly in the hands of private fish merchants. For example, there are 75 fresh-fish merchants, 21 processable variety agents and 25 dry-fish merchants at Veraval. All of them are private merchants. Amongst the 75 fresh-fish merchants, some 45 have boats bonded to them. Out of the 1720 OBM boats, about 900 are bonded in this manner. The merchants with bonded boats record on the average an annual turnover of 8 lakhs of rupees. In contrast, a merchant without having any bonded boat makes an annual turnover of Rs. 5 lakhs. The institutional meaning of loan becomes immediately clear from this data. The authors, however, believe that the statistics of average is rather misleading. In Veraval, there are about 8 to 10 large merchants who get a turnover of Rs. 24 lakhs each annually. They define the price

by applying their own standards on the quality of catch arriving by the boats. They buy fish by number or volume (baskets) and sell by weight. Consequently, per rupee of consumer price, the fishermen get 59 paise for fresh fish and 56 paise for the processable varieties. We have no public policy to amend the situation.

The fish processing sector is also developing in Veraval, which appears to be sensitive to the institutionalities of finance and marketing. For example, the processors are reluctant to invest on trawlers, obviously to avoid the risks of annual fluctuations of the catch. They have consequently left the opportunity of vertical integration unutilised within the fishing economy. Nevertheless, they have gone in for larger capacity processing plants to take advantage from the variations in the quantum of landings of fish. They buy through agents and service primarily the export market.

The opening up of the export market has had an unfavourable impact on consumer satisfaction. Between 1967 and 1978, for example, per capita availability of fish in India had increased from 2.39 Kg. to 3.84 Kg. However, during the same period, the price of fish has increased by almost 315%. This can be explained, if we deduct total export from the domestic catch. The increase in net availability at domestic market, according to the authors, was almost insignificant. They also observed that the trawlers have succeeded in increasing the quantum of harvests of the non-edible varieties disproportionately. All these together mean that the public policies on the modernization of marine fishing did not take into consideration the peculiarities of the ambience governing this sector.

The book is a good example of documentation on the operational and managerial aspects

of marine fishing in the Veraval zone of Gujarat. The net-work of commodity flow has been elaborately described. The lacunae in the administration of public policies have been squarely identified. This study will appear useful to the planners, researchers and managers interested in marine fishing, provided they can tolerate an otherwise careless typographical editing done for it.

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Profile of Labour — Socio-economic Studies in Ahmedabad: Pramod Verma, Academic Book Centre, Ahmedabad, 1981, pp. 139.

The book deals with the five socio-economic studies of labour in Ahmedabad. The studies cover the following areas: needs and welfare of chawl dwellers; pattern of consumption expenditure; knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning; the problems relating to social disharmony; and an overview of the strains and stresses of development being faced by the disadvantaged labour such as slum dwellers, women workers, self-employed women and aged agricultural workers.

The first socio-economic survey was concerned with several facets of the workers' perception and 'non-work' behaviour. Firstly, it enquired into the perceptions of the working class about employers, trade unions and politics. Secondly, it investigated the actual living conditions of the working class. Thirdly, the social aspects of the workers' out-of-plant behaviour were assessed in terms of social habits, social life, and community involvement. The survey revealed that the majority of the