

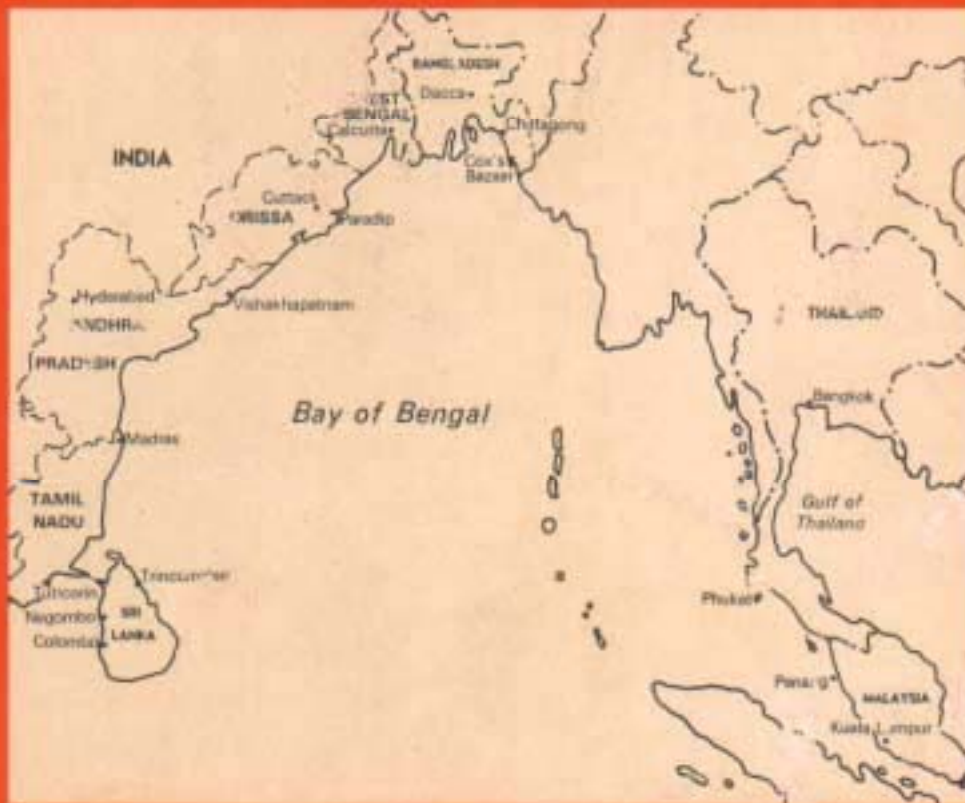
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Report of the Training Course for Fish Marketing Personnel of Tamil Nadu

Madras, India
3-14 December, 1979



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

**Report of the
Training Course for
Fish Marketing Personnel
of Tamil Nadu**

Madras, India

December 3-14, 1979

Executing Agency

**Food and Agriculture Organisation
of the United Nations**

Funding Agency

**Swedish International
Development Authority**

**Development of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Bay of Bengal
Madras, India, September 1980.**

P R E F A C E

This document is the report of a 12-day training course held in December 1979 for officials of Tamil Nadu state in South India who are concerned with fish marketing. The course was organised jointly by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Fisheries and the Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP).

The report describes the conduct of the course, and discusses in detail the principal method of instruction adopted, the " business game" and the response to it from participants. The report also reproduces the manual supplied to participants containing data for the business game.

The report may be found useful by small-scale fisheries planners, by people engaged in fish marketing, and by organisers of similar training courses and workshops.

The training course was an activity of the Bay of Bengal Programme for the Development of Small-Scale Fisheries, referred to in brief as the Bay of Bengal Programme. Its main aims are to develop and demonstrate technologies to improve the conditions of the small-scale fishermen and the supply of fish from the small-scale sector in five countries bordering the Bay of Bengal-Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The Programme is executed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and funded by the Swedish International Development Authority.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the Training Course for Fish Marketing Personnel of Tamil Nadu was to upgrade the management and accounting skills of the participants. The course was the outcome of discussions held between the Bay of Bengal Programme and the Secretary, Forests and Fisheries, and the Director of Fisheries of Tamil Nadu. It was felt that a suitably designed course on modern marketing techniques might be useful in the context of the paucity of trained fish marketing personnel in Tamil Nadu.

It was decided that the type of training most suitable was the " Business Management Game for Marketing of Fish " developed by the White Fish Authority, United Kingdom. Two consultants from the White Fish Authority-John Marjoribanks and Ron Nicholson-were recruited for the conduct of the course. Two other experts were drafted for part-time lectures : fisheries economist Barry V. Lanier, from Los Angeles, U.S.A., who had helped to conduct a similar training course in Sri Lanka ; and Col. Nirmal Singh of the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad. Mr. M. T. Nathan of the Bay of Bengal Programme functioned as the course administrator.

Participants in the course were 21 middle-level officials from the Department of Fisheries and the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation and from fishermen's co-operatives. They were drawn from various districts. All of them were involved in some way or the other with fish marketing problems. (The list of participants and staff is set out in Appendix 1).

The course was held at Hotel President in Madras from December 3 to 14. It began with a brief welcome address by Mr. Lars. O. Engvall, Director of the Bay of Bengal Programme. There was no formal opening ceremony in keeping with the informal nature of the proceedings.

The " business game," which constituted the core of the course, was introduced to participants on the forenoon of December 3 and continued all through the course. Besides the 'business game, there were lectures on marketing management, accountancy, market research and pricing ; films and slide shows on management and accountancy ; and group discussions on current problems. There was one field trip to the fish stall operated by the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation at Teynampet, Madras. Appendix 2 details the course programme.

Certificates were distributed to the participants on the concluding day, December 14, by Mr. R. Srinivasan, Joint Director of Fisheries, on behalf of the Director of Fisheries, Mr. C. Chellappan.

The chapters that follow describe the conduct of the business game and the participants' evaluation. Appendix 3 reproduces the manual supplied to participants.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BUSINESS GAME

The business game "played" at the training course was a management exercise specially designed by the White Fish Authority, United Kingdom, to meet training needs in developing countries. It was tried out earlier with success at training courses in Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

In the business game, players assume the role of rival officials in comparable organisations : data is available on the infrastructure, the marketing environment and the organisation's liabilities and assets. The participants now immerse themselves in an imaginary commercial world. If the business game concerns fish marketing, participants buy, store, process and sell fish, all on paper. Their decisions on these matters, and their "balance sheets" are now debated by the total membership of **the** course.

The **raison d'être** of the business game in a training course is the problem-solving and decision-making it requires of participants, which highlights the interdependence of production, processing and marketing. The participants learn from their decisions, as also from their errors and their interaction with other players; they consequently gain in confidence and experience, and are better game-players in real-life marketing situations.

At the Tamil Nadu training course, participants in the business game were divided into five teams to represent five competing fish marketing co-operatives of Tamil Nadu of identical size and status. The teams were expected to improve the finances of the co-operatives, then in a bad shape, through executive decisions on the purchase, marketing, storage and processing of fish.

Each team had to state the "objectives" of its co-operative at the start of the game. Its success in meeting these objectives would be discussed by the five teams at the end of the game. Sample objectives-maximization of profits ; minimization of cost ; provision of jobs.

The manuals given to participants (text in Appendix 3) supplied basic data about the co-operatives besides some geographic and market information. From the manuals, participants learnt about the assets and liabilities of their co-operative, its financial status, its labour force, the capacity of various plants run by the co-operative (ice-making, fish-drying, fish-freezing and cold storage). The amount of fish the co-operative could use in the game, the species of fish (restricted in the game to two, ground fish and shellfish), and the prices of fish were also indicated.

The manual told participants what decisions they had to make concerning the co-operative. Each team was given six opportunities for decision-making ; once before the start of the game, and once during each of five "periods" or stages in the development of the co-operative. The teams had to convey their decisions to the referee (the consultants at the training course) by filling in appropriate "report" forms for each period.

Before the start of the game the teams had to decide on the location of a new fish market, the size of cold storage facilities, the purchase of vehicles and ice boxes, the size of bank loans, if any, the labour force to be hired for maintaining the processing plants and the vehicles.

For the first of these decisions-on the location of a new fish market-the teams could choose from six sites, three rural and three urban. The manual contained the results of " market studies "- tabular data on various income groups in the site areas and on fish preferences of each group. The teams could thereby estimate the likely consumer expenditure on fish at each site.

During the remainder of the game the five "periods"-the teams had to make more complex decisions. A sampling follows :

- Each team (co-operative) could bid for and procure some quantities of fish at fish auctions. This would augment the usual supplies of the co-operative. How much fish should the co-operative buy at the auction ? The teams had to give their answers by filling Form 1, the Fish Availability Report.

- How many new personnel, skilled, and unskilled, should the co-operative recruit ? How many should it retrench ? The teams had to deal with Form 2, the Personnel Report.

--- How should the fish catch be processed ? How much of it should be dried and salted ? Quantities to be processed had to be entered in Form 3, the Processing Report.

-How should the fish be distributed, bearing in mind the number of vehicles and ice boxes available, the capacity of each vehicle, and mandatory requirements on ice-fish ratio for the transportation of fresh fish ? The Distribution Report had to be tackled.

-What would be the marketing strategy.? Which were the best sales outlets? The Marketing Report had to be completed.

At the end of the five periods, reports submitted by the five teams were evaluated by the total membership of the course in the light of the teams' stated objectives.

Thus the business game simulated commercial fish market conditions. Participants entered into the spirit of the game and identified themselves keenly with the fortunes of their co-operative.

3. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Course evaluation questionnaires were distributed to participants on the concluding day of the course. Some comments :

-Fifteen of the 21 participants said they had benefited from the training course. Six said they had gained adequately. There was no negative response.

-Duration : Was the course too long or too short ? Opinion was divided about equally between those who would have preferred a longer course and those who felt that the duration was adequate.

-Suggestions for future training courses : Visits to successful marketing organisations in neighbouring states ; a greater focus on marketing management ; more intensive discussion on current marketing problems.

-Participants agreed that the business game was an effective tool of instruction, and provided excellent management training, both theoretical and practical.