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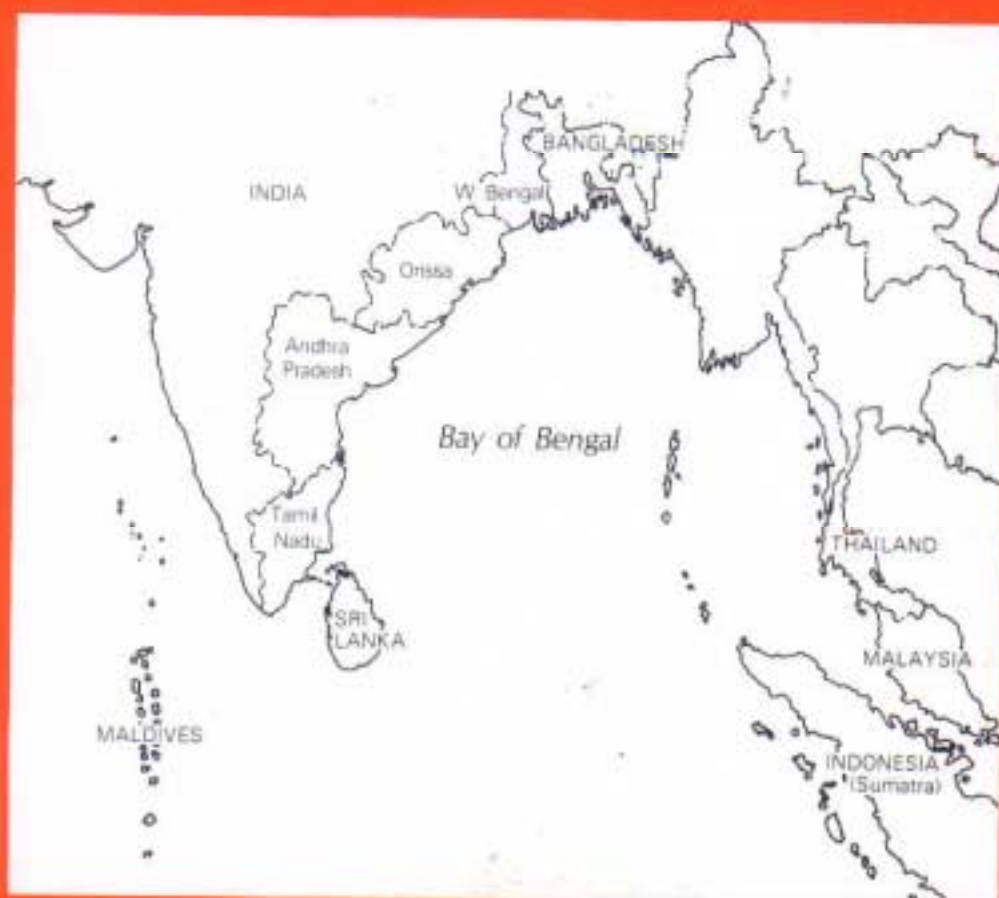
BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME

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Development of Small-Scale Fisheries

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Towards Shared Learning : An Approach to Nonformal Adult Education for Marine Fisherfolk of Tamil Nadu, India



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

TOWARDS SHARED LEARNING :
AN APPROACH TO NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION
FOR MARINE FISHERFOLK OF TAMIL NADU, INDIA.

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PREFACE

This document reports on the efforts of the BOBP (Bay of Bengal Programme) at developing a curriculum for a non-formal adult education programme (NFAE) for marine fisherfolk in the villages of coastal Tamil Nadu. It describes the curriculum package devised towards this end, "Towards Shared Learning", which consists of a number of publications. Two of these publications, the Trainers' Manual and the Animators' Guide, were published by the BOBP in English in July 1985. Other publications have been printed in Tamil by the Directorate of Non-Formal/Adult Education, Tamil Nadu.

This report also discusses the findings of field testing of the curriculum package. In addition, it summarizes the results of an informal study on the lives of Tamil Nadu marine fisherfolk, and another study on typical learners and "animators" (village-level teachers) in order to acquaint readers with the people for whom the curriculum package was devised.

The report includes a project proposal for applying this package among coastal fisherfolk throughout Tamil Nadu. The possibility of adapting the package for use elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal region is also discussed separately.

The BOBP's work on the curriculum package began in 1982 and concluded in 1985. The work was coordinated by a BOBP sociologist, and was executed in cooperation with a number of institutions and individuals whose role is acknowledged below.

The preparation of this report is an activity of the small-scale fisheries project of the Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP). The project is funded by SIDA (Swedish International Development Authority) and executed by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), and covers five countries bordering the Bay of Bengal — Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The main goals of the project are to develop, demonstrate and promote appropriate technologies and methodologies to improve the conditions of small-scale fisher-folk in member countries.

This document is a working paper and has not been officially cleared either by the FAO or the government concerned.

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Finally, the BOBP thanks those Tamil Nadu marine fisher-folk who, by sharing their experiences with the project and by helping it identify their needs, provided the basis for the evolution of the curriculum package.

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SUMMARY

This document describes BOBP's efforts to operationalize the concept of non-formal education by developing a curriculum package (named TOWARDS SHARED LEARNING) for the marine fisherfolk of Tamil Nadu. The curriculum package consists of a number of publications that are devised to be used in adult education centres in coastal Tamil Nadu.

The package adopts the 'participatory teaching - learning method' which encourages the participants to share their life experiences and systematize these experiences. The crucial assumptions of such an approach are:

- * Education is an internalized process and not the sole activity of the outsider.
- * Education is possible only in an atmosphere which promotes equality between teachers and learners.

The idea of developing a curriculum package came from the marine fisherfolk of Adirampattinam village in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu. They were participating in another BOBP project and requested an education programme. This led BOBP to consider evolving a curriculum package for use in non-formal adult education centres in Tamil Nadu. The process of developing the package included :

- * A study of marine fisher-folk in some Tamil Nadu coastal villages in order to understand their life-styles.
- * Testing the viability of the participatory approach with fisherfolk from Adirampattinam.
- * Conducting workshops to develop the curriculum package.
(Representatives from government and non-government agencies and other NFAE experts were invited to participate in these workshops.)
- * Field testing the curriculum package and revising its contents after field testing.

A brief description of each of the components of the curriculum package is presented below.

Animators' Guide (Printed in English by BOBP)

A handy, well-illustrated book which helps the animator to encourage learners to discuss their lifestyles, work environment and beliefs in order to actively involve them in their own learning process. It consists of 33 lessons from eight broad areas of life: community, occupation, health and nutrition, social problems, leadership, income and savings, cooperation and education.

Literacy Primer and Workbook (Printed in Tamil by the Directorate of Non-Formal/ Adult Education, Tamil Nadu)

The Literacy Primer is an attractive four-colour publication with 16 lessons that introduce 147 commonly used letters of the Tamil alphabet. The letters of the alphabet are taught through words and pictures. The Primer's workbook contains exercises for learners to practise reading and writing at home.

Supplementary Readers (A few printed in Tamil by the Directorate of Non-Formal/ Adult Education, Tamil Nadu)

These easy-to-read, well-illustrated colour booklets provide fisherfolk with reading materials to sustain their interest in reading and enhance their self-awareness. About 40 such booklets have been prepared, of which four have been printed.

Numeracy Primer (Printed in Tamil by the Directorate of Non-Formal/Adult Education, Tamil Nadu)

The Numeracy Primer is intended to help learners sharpen their numerical skills, learn basic arithmetic, how to read and write numbers. It also helps relate the traditional modes of measuring time, volume, weight, length, etc., common among fisherfolk, with the standard mode.

Animators' Edition of the Numeracy Primer (Printed in Tamil by the Directorate of Non-Formal/Adult Education, Tamil Nadu)

The purpose of this book is to help animators to use the Numeracy Primer for learners effectively. It covers the topics contained in the Numeracy Primer for learners and explains the concepts introduced and the method of teaching each lesson.

Trainers' Manual (Printed in English by BOBP)

This Manual, well-illustrated with sketches, is a guide to trainers of animators in NFAE centres. It contains easy-to-use, step-by-step explanations for trainers conducting their sessions. It also contains a 12-day model training programme to enable the trainees to become effective animators.

The training model was field-tested by BOBP in Adaikalapuram village, Tamil Nadu, in September 1984. It was also field-tested by the Rural Development Seva Centre (RDSC), a non-government organization which conducts adult education programmes in rural villages. The results of the field-testing are presented in this report.

The report also discusses the points raised at several BOBP-sponsored meetings to examine the possibility of implementing the curriculum package in coastal Tamil Nadu and adapting it for use in other areas. Various government and non-government agencies participated in these meetings.

1. INTRODUCTION

The BOBP's (Bay of Bengal Programme's) strategy for the development of small-scale fisheries is two-pronged :

1. To boost fish production and income in order to improve the economic status of fisher-folk.
2. To develop the potential of fisherfolk to participate in and influence their own development — economic, social, cultural.

The relevance of non-formal adult education (NFAE) is crucial to the second approach. Non-formal education means participatory learning and sharing of experiences. It helps build the self-confidence of people, has a liberating influence on them and allows them better control of situations that affect their lives.

The NFAE learning atmosphere promotes equality of relationships, respect for people and trust in one's own ability to solve problems. It provides the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for learners to examine their own problems, consider alternative solutions and take decisions to act. The atmosphere facilitates participation by everyone in the programme. In short, the approach is 'participatory'.

This approach to non-formal education is appreciated by everyone who is active in adult education. But getting it to work — "operationalization" — has been difficult. That is what BOBP has tried to do in this project.

The project aimed at evolving a tool for operationalizing the concept of non-formal education and making it a reality. The tool employed is the curriculum package developed for the marine fisherfolk of coastal Tamil Nadu.

The 'participatory approach' -the central focus of the tool evolved — had to be practised for evolving the tool itself. This meant constant interaction among the marine fisherfolk, the field workers, the government and NGOs. The process was long and collaborative. This was recognized as the process of operationalizing the concept of non-formal education.

Those involved in the production of the curriculum package strongly believe that people are aware of their needs and problems, but lack the opportunity to find solutions to them. Also that development is an internal process and not the activity of an outsider.

This publication is an overview of the efforts of BOBP in evolving an approach to non-formal education in the form of the curriculum package "Towards Shared Learning". Figures 1 and 2 indicate the evolution of different components of the curriculum and the interaction of the people involved in its production.

The report begins with a description of the various publications that form the curriculum package. Each publication is taken up in turn ; its purpose, format and contents are outlined, the approach behind it and its evolution are described. The curriculum description is followed by a discussion of efforts to field-test the package.

Curriculum evolution is the basis of any educational programme. But it is not an end in itself. How far it succeeds in helping tap and develop the potential of the target group-in this case marine fisherfolk — is vital. Much effort went into examining this question.

At several BOBP-sponsored meetings held in 1985, various governmental and non-governmental agencies examined proposals for implementing the curriculum package in coastal Tamil Nadu and for adapting it for use in other areas. These discussions are summarized in this publication.

An informal study on the lives of the fisherfolk from some coastal villages in Tamil Nadu and a short profile of some typical animators and learners are presented in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. These are meant to acquaint the reader with the lives of the people for whom the project was evolved.

Figure 1

TOWARDS SHARED LEARNING: EVOLUTION QF CURRICULUM

