

CHAPTER – I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Fishing is one of the oldest employments of mankind. This occupation existed even before the emergence of agriculture and still continues to be one of the major occupations of the world. Fish products constitute the primary sector as does agriculture. In earliest times most foodstuffs were used at once and not stored; but as population increased, techniques were developed for preserving fish by drying, smoking, salting etc. It became desirable to catch large quantities and consequently specialised equipment was devised. Individual fishing was replaced by collective efforts involving larger, more effective gear

Fishing is one of the oldest employments of mankind. This occupation existed even before the emergence of agriculture and still continues to be one of the major occupations of the world. Fish products constitute the primary sector as does agriculture. In earliest times most foodstuffs were used at once and not stored; but as population increased, techniques were developed for preserving fish by drying, smoking, salting etc. It became desirable to catch large quantities and consequently specialised equipment was devised. Individual fishing was replaced by collective efforts involving larger, more effective gear.

Fishing equipment and methods were improved through centuries. Mechanisation came to fishing in the 19th century. Small fishing boats became motorised at the beginning of the 20th century. Today, some industrial countries lack sufficient manpower for their fisheries and are attempting to automate with the help of sea borne computers.

Fisheries and aquaculture remain important sources of food, nutrition, income and livelihoods for hundreds of million people around the world. Moreover, fish continues to be one of the most-traded food commodities worldwide with more than half of fish exports by value originating in developing countries. Recent reports by high-level

experts, international organizations, industry and civil society representatives all highlight the tremendous potential of the oceans and inland waters now, and even more so in the future, to contribute significantly to food security and adequate nutrition for a global population expected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050.

Fishing in India is a major industry in its coastal states, employing over 14 million people. Fish production in India has increased more than tenfold since its independence in 1947. India has 7517 kilometres of marine coastline, 3,827 fishing villages, and 1,914 traditional fish landing centres. India's fresh water resources consist of 195,210 kilometres of rivers and canals, 2.9 million hectares of minor and major reservoirs, 2.4 million hectares of ponds and lakes, and about 0.8 million hectares of flood plain wetlands and water bodies. India is a major supplier of fish in the world. India exports over 11, 34,948 tonnes of fish, to some 90 countries, earning over \$5.78 billion in FY17.

Fishery Science and Agriculture is the sunshine sector of Indian Economy which provide livelihood to the economically backward population. Moreover, Fishery Science has immense scope and potential to earn foreign currency. It has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates growth of a number of subsidiary industries and is a source of cheap and nutritious food besides being a source of foreign exchange earner.

Kerala is blessed with immense fresh water resources. Besides, there are estuaries, backwaters, brackish water area, pokkali & prawn filtration fields and private shrimp farms. All these bodies of water provide rich sources of inland fisheries. Inland fish production provides significant contribution to animal protein supplies in rural areas of the State. Most of the inland production is consumed locally and marketed domestically. The Inland sector of the State contribute around 0.78 lakh metric tonnes of fish annually, which accounts for a value of ₹30,000 lakh.

Inland natural water resources are usually in the form of lakes, reservoirs, rivers and ponds. These natural waters play an important role in fisheries point of view. These freshwater sources are in the stage of devastation by pollution. The fish varieties in these water sources are reducing at an immense amount with the destruction of their

ecosystem, and it also affects those people who have chosen fishing as their livelihood.

In India, the importance of fisheries sector is well known as a provider of livelihood to more than six millions of people directly and indirectly and as a major foreign exchange earner. Development of several suitable technologies coupled with extension activities during the last 50 years increased Indian fish production manifold, particularly to occupy the eighth position in the global capture fish production. Presently the fisheries sector contributes about Rs.22200 crores to GDP, which is about 1.4 per cent of the total GDP and 4 per cent of production of the agricultural sector.'

Kerala is one of the leading maritime states. It has a coastline of 590 kms, which constitute 10 per cent of India's total coastline. Fishing has naturally been the major occupation of the inhabitants of its coastal area from time immemorial. Out of the 3638 fishing villages in the country, 222 are in Kerala. Similarly, of the 2251 fish landing centres in India, 226 are in the State. Kerala, which occupied a proud place in the fish production in India

The geographical condition of Kerala is favourable for reaping the marine wealth. Due to plenty of seashore and the backwaters, fishing as a profession existed in Kerala even before the advent of fishing habits in the country. In Kerala, fishermen community is one of the most important communities constituting more than 2.60 per cent of the total population.

The relationship of early Arabs and Europeans like Portuguese with Malabar Coast contributed to the development of fishermen in this region faster than other regions in India. The Malabar Coast provides one of the richest fishing zones in India.

Fishermen constitute the backbone of Kerala's fishing industry. Hence the growth and development of the industry depends upon the social and economic well being of the fishermen. Interest in the study was further raised due to the technological changes in the fisheries sector. Mechanisation was introduced in 1954 and as a result mechanised boat came into operation. To counter the mechanical boat fishing, traditional

fishermen motorised their crafts. The technological changes were made for the upliftment of the socioeconomic conditions of fisherfolk by increasing their productivity. Hence an attempt is made to assess whether social and economic conditions imposed on the fishing community by history are still continuing in the same magnitude.