

## INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME (BOBP)

### BACKGROUND

The Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP) is a regional programme of the FAO. Seven countries - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand participate in the programme. Its main component is the project 'Small-Scale Fisherfolk Communities in the Bay of Bengal' funded jointly by SIDA and DANIDA. It began in 1987 for a duration of 5 years. It succeeds the SIDA-funded FAO project 'Development of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Bay of Bengal' which was operational 1979-86. Another BOBP component is a project on post-harvest fisheries technology executed and funded by ODA(UK). Besides, national projects such as Reef Fishery in the Maldives (funded by UNDP) also function under the BOBP umbrella.

The BOBP seeks to develop and demonstrate new technologies and methodologies to improve the conditions of marine small-scale fisherfolk. It also assists member-countries in wider-scale application of successful technologies and methodologies (See Appendix 1).

The project's basic approach is to examine major problems and constraints in small-scale fisheries which hinder improvement and development. These are tackled through pilot-scale activities undertaken on the basis of their relevance to the project's objectives; their apparent technical, economic and social feasibility; a reasonable time frame; government priorities and support. Applying solutions and findings from pilot activities is the responsibility of governments and of national agencies in member countries.

The BOBP has carried out in member-countries several score activities relating to fishing technology, brackishwater culture, extension and fishery resources. Several activities have been initiated in post-harvest technology. A sampling of past and present activities is found in Appendix 2.

### INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A well-equipped library helps to meet the information needs of BOBP by establishing a knowledge base on the small-scale fisheries and the fisherfolk of member-countries. Socio-economics with a special emphasis on women, extension techniques, fishing technology, aquaculture, fishery resources and post-harvest technologies are the main subject areas. The library has some 6000 publications; more than 1000 FAO reports and documents; plus government documents, reports and reprints on small-scale fisheries, fishing communities and community organization.

BOBP receives several journals and newsletters through subscription and exchange. A microfiche reader with printer is available; a microfiche library on appropriate technology was acquired recently. NTIS reports and FAO fed documents in microfiche are being added. A microfiche set of all BOBP publications have been acquired.

Often BOBP activities began with literature searches and reviews to establish current knowledge on the subject. Contacts are made with scientists and institutions dealing with the subject. Database searches, bibliographies and resource investigations are undertaken to meet specific needs.

BOBP is a significant information generator. The information output includes a quarterly newsletter, Bay of Bengal News (32 issues as of date); technical reports (more than 120); audio-visuals, video programmes and photo exhibitions. BOBP's photo collection includes several thousand slides and black and white/color photographs.

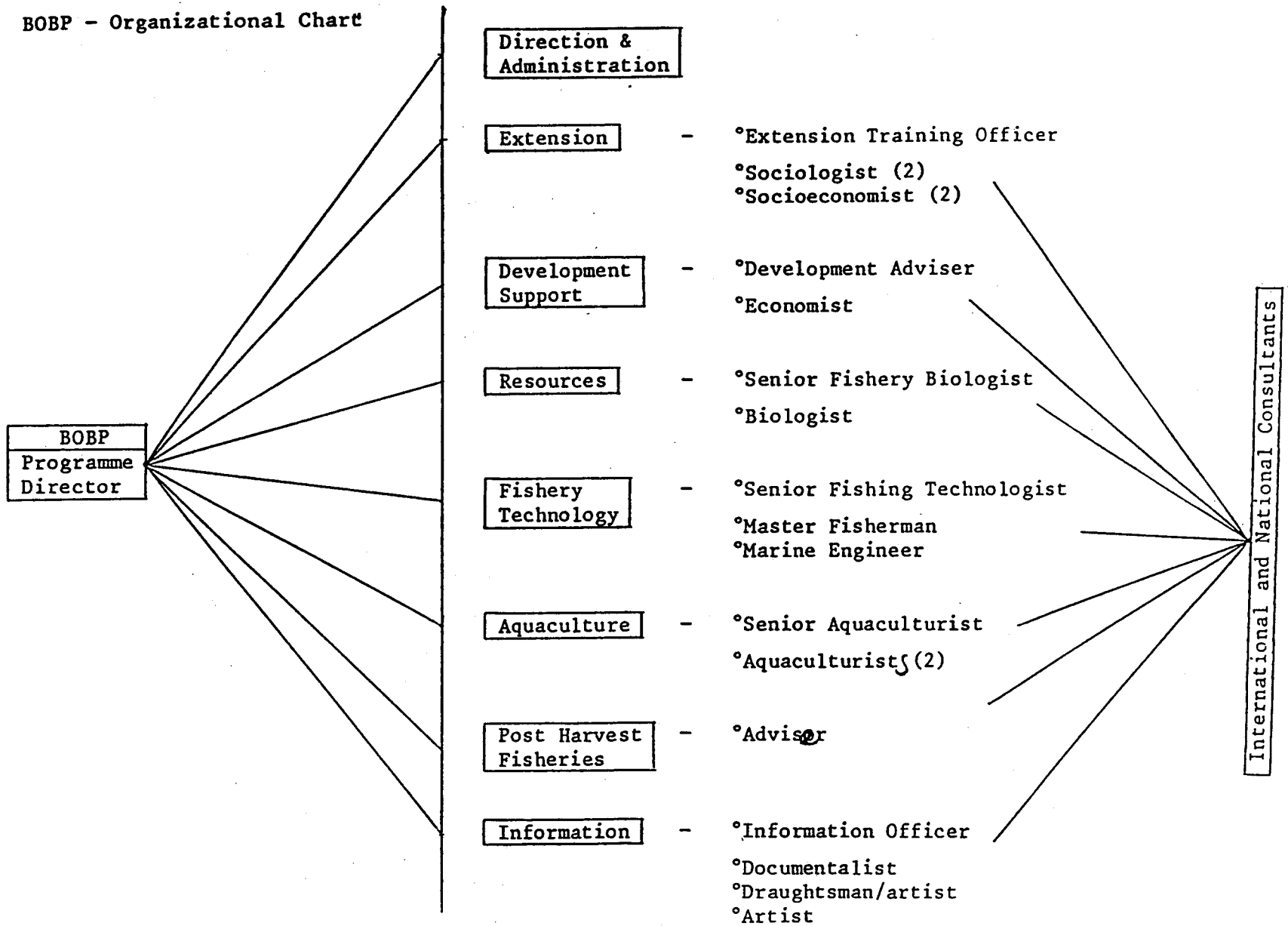
Information generated by BOBP is directed to users at various levels; researchers and scientists, planners and decision-makers, fisheries officials, mass media professionals, international development and funding agencies, fisherfolk.

A major problem faced by BOBP staff is that very often, needed information is either not available or difficult to access. Most relevant information is with government departments and research institutions; it is not published, or its availability not publicised. When published, the information is generally not distributed or disseminated as a matter of routine, immediately after production. BOBP has exchange arrangements with most fishery institutions in the region, but their publications are not received regularly.

Another difficulty is in getting copies of journal articles from other institutions, as information on availability of these journals (Union catalogue of serials) is sparse, and organized document-delivery procedures do not apparently exist in those institutions.

To identify ways and means of improving the information flow, a regional consultation was organized by the BOBP in October 1988. Representatives were invited from Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The consultation recommended that a regional organization should take the responsibility of developing a continually updated database of data sources in the region. BOBP has approached the SAARC Secretariat seeking its advice on coordination of effort and hopes for a positive response.

BOBP - Organizational Chart



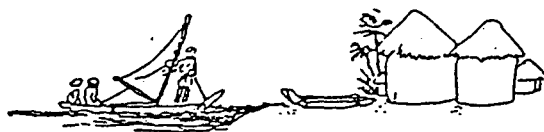
BOBP SCOPE, OBJECTIVES & INFORMATION NEEDS

SCOPE

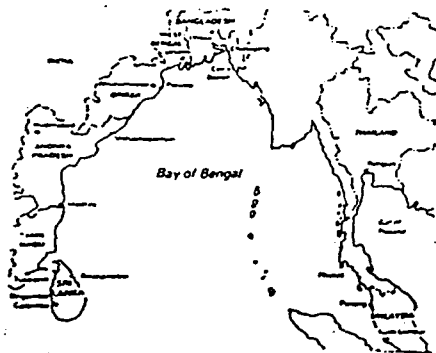
SUBJECT: SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES AND FISHERFOLK COMMUNITIES



ENVIRONMENT: MARINE

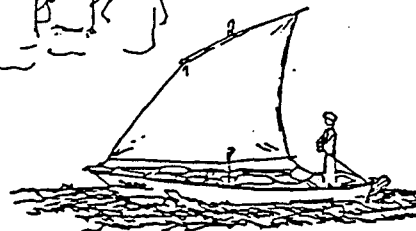


GEOGRAPHY: COUNTRIES BORDERING THE BAY OF BENGAL



OBJECTIVES

BETTER LIVING STANDARDS FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERFOLK THROUGH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT



INFORMATION NEEDS

EXTENSION

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER  
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION  
WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

AQUACULTURE

ENVIRONMENT/ECOLOGY  
TECHNIQUES/METHODS  
MARINE BIOLOGY  
NUTRITION /FEED  
DISEASES

FISHING TECHNOLOGY

FISHING GEARS & METHODS  
FISHING CRAFT  
PROPULSION SYSTEMS

RESOURCES

ECOLOGY/ENVIRONMENT  
MARINE BIOLOGY/TAXONOMY  
FISHERY STATISTICS

POST-HARVEST TECHNOLOGY

FISH HANDLING  
PROCESSING  
MARKETING

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES & TECHNOLOGIES  
TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MEDIA  
FISHERFOLK-MEDIA INTERACTION

BOBP ACTIVITIES - PAST AND PRESENT

APPENDIX 2

1. Finfish cage culture, Thailand : Initially demonstrated in selected coastal villages of Phang Nga province, later extended to all six provinces of Southern Thailand.
2. High-opening bottomtrawling, India : Introduction in Tamil Nadu was highly successful. It was later extended to Gujarat and Orissa by CIFNET (Central Institute for Fisheries Nautical & Engineering Training) to whom BOBP transferred the technology.
3. Credit for Small-scale Fisherfolk in Orissa : Nearly 2500 fisherfolk families in Orissa received loans worth Rs. 7 million in two years in the form of fishing craft, fishing gear and bicycles for marketing. The credit methodology was formulated by BOBP.
4. Non-formal Primary Education for Fisherfolk Children, Orissa : A curriculum tailored to the needs of fisherfolk children aged between 7 and 15 was formulated by BOBP; text books for fisherfolk children were prepared and seminars to train teachers in the use of the curriculum organized. 40 NFE centres in four coastal districts were established.
5. Non-formal Adult Education, Tamil Nadu : Booklets have been prepared for adult fisherfolk, for their teachers and animators and for the trainers of animators. These have proved very popular; they are found useful for rural folk worldwide not merely for fisherfolk.
6. Beachlanding Craft, India : Nearly 200 beachcrafts designed and developed by BOBP and built at national boatyards are fishing in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. They help increase catches and incomes, and expand jobs in boatbuilding, fishing, fish processing and marketing.
7. Motorization of Chandis, Bangladesh : Initiated by BOBP in Bhola district of Bangladesh in 1981. The motorized Chandis netted catches twice as high as that of traditional Chandis. Some 50 motorized Chandis now operate in Bhola district, and the process is gathering momentum.
8. Cockle Culture, Malaysia : In cooperation with ICLARM, Manila, BOBP executed several activities to expand the knowledge base and thereby improve management of the cockle, which is Malaysia's chief aquaculture product.
9. Fishing Boat Development, Sri Lanka : The BOBP has redesigned and re-equipped two popular Sri Lankan fishing craft in the 30-foot operations. These are the 9.65m SRL-15 described as Sri Lanka's smallest offshore fishing craft, and the 10.3 m SRL-34. A motorized fibreglass outrigger canoe has also been designed for small-scale fishermen.

10. Resources : During 1983-86, a UNDP-funded project of the BOBP helped strengthen the capabilities of six member-countries in assessing fishery resources. The project also reviewed fishery resources of the region and current assessment and management practices. Special investigations were conducted on the hilsa, tuna and mackerel resources. During the post-1987 phase of BOBP, the work on resources is being integrated with that of the small-scale fisheries project.

Three FAO fishery resource projects have been implemented with BOBP expertise in Sri Lanka and Maldives. For two of these projects (FAO/TCP), BOBP organized exploratory and demonstration fishing to probe the abundance of tuna in the offshore waters of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The third project, reef fishery in the Maldives, is being funded by the UNDP. It will determine the abundance of reef stocks and the best way to develop the fishery with an eye to export.

11. People's Participation (PEP): is a major concern at BOBP, and a special one-year SIDA-funded project (1986-87) which consisted of field work, case studies, and consultation with fishermen's groups, concluded with a well-attended seminar. Factors that help or hinder PEP were systematically studied. The whole exercise may help promote a more conscious participatory relationship between projects and fish workers in the region. PEP is already an integral part of all BOBP activities.

Current activities of BOBP include:

- Design and demonstration of extension services in coastal districts of Bangladesh.
- Assistance to NGOs (non-government organizations) in India through training and technology inputs in fishing technology, aquaculture and extension.
- Scheme to increase fisherfolk earnings in Langkat district of North Sumatra, Indonesia by developing entrepreneurial capabilities in fishing, fish processing and non-fishing activities.
- Extension services for fisherfolk in Ranong Province, Thailand.
- Demonstration of beach-hauling devices in the Maldives.
- One-year study-cum-training project in Sri Lanka to design a bankable credit scheme for fisherfolk.
- Radio programmes for Sri Lankan fisherfolk, covering news, weather forecasts, entertainment and education.
- Improved technology for shrimp seed collection in coastal villages of West Bengal.
- Setting up of backyard hatcheries in West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh
- Viable technology for small-scale family based oyster farms in Malaysia.

- Seaweed culture demonstration in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu, India and Chilaw, Sri Lanka.
- A comprehensive one-year study of Kattumaram fisherfolk communities in two centres of Andhra Pradesh.

Post-harvest technology activities:

- Demonstration on the use of ice aboard Navasand beachlanding craft in Andhra Pradesh.
- Fish marketing studies in east coast states of India.
- Study on conversion of waste fish or low-value fish at fishing harbours in east coast states of India into prawn feed, and on local manufacture of nutritionally balanced prawn pellet feed.
- Seaweed marketing studies in India and Sri Lanka.