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A NOTE ON THE LONG LINE FISHERY AT SIKKA, GUJARAT*

Sikka is a small fish landing centre in the Gulf of Kutch, about 30 km north of Jamnagar. In the Village 135 fishermen families with a population of 995 members are actively involved in various fishing activities of which 494 are actively engaged in fishing. A total of 99 boats are in operation of which only eight are mechanised. Three types of gill nets, stake net and long line are the gears used for fishing. Of these the long line deserves special mention for they are being made out of old material and therefore economical.

The long lines locally known as 'Wagha' are made of polyethylene and nylon. The main line is about 400 to 600 m long and has a diameter of 4 to 6 mm. 200 to 300 hooks, locally known as 'Kundi' or 'Gill' are attached to the main line at an interval of 4 m by means of small branch lines of 1 m length and 2 mm diameter each having two to three hooks. Plastic cans of 20 to 35 litre capacity are used as floats and weights of 20-35 kg are used as anchors.

An interesting fact with regard to the making of long lines is that 80% of its material come from old gill nets. The main line is prepared from old head and foot ropes of gill nets while the branch lines of 2 mm diameter are prepared from twine obtained from the old webbing of gill net and old ropes, polyethylene, coir or jute. The lines for floats and anchor are also made from the webbings of the gill net. The split up cost and total cost of 400 m and 600 m long lines are given in Table 1.

Flesh of octopii is being used as bait in long line operation. The octopii locally known as 'Saravan' occur in plenty in the nearshore waters along the Sikka coast. The number of persons engaged in long line fishery varies from 4 to 7 according to the size of the boat. The fishing grounds are 10-20 km away from the coast where the depth may range between 20 and 30 m. During a trip 3-4 operations are carried out, each lasting for about 1-3 hours.

The catch usually brought by the long liners include 'Ghol', 'Koth', 'Dara', cat fishes, eels, perches and sharks. Special observations were made on the catch, composition, CPUE and price realised for nine boats and the data were used to calculate the same for the 35 long liners in operation at Sikka. The results are given in Table 2.

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Table 1. Specifications of long lines made out of old material

Items	Size of rope/ twine & No. of hooks	Weight (kg) and number	Rates (Rs/kg/ No.)	Cost (Rs.)	
				400 m long line	600 m long line
Main line	4-6 mm	3-5	80.00	240	400
Branch line	2 mm	2-3	60.00	120	180
Hook	2-3	200-300	1.25	250	375
Misc. (Jerry can, anchor etc.)	—	—	—	150	300
Total				760	1,255

Table 2. Total catch, CPUE and income realised (estimated for a day)

Group	Estimated catch (kg)	C.P.U.E. (kg)	Price (Rs.kg)	Income per boat (Rs.)
Cat fish	20,222	578	2.50	1,445
Ghol	1,003	29	8	232
Sharks	331	18	2	34
Total				1,711

Due to the lack of infrastructure facilities such as ice plant, storage and transportation, fishermen are compelled to dispose off their catches to the middle men at the landing centre who in turn carry them to Jamnagar and from there the fish are being transported to Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta by train.

It has been reported by fishermen that the long line fishery is more lucrative at Sikka. The significant aspect in this regard is that, here the long lines are made exclusively of material recovered from old gill nets and hence very economical. The fishermen have further stated that they are interested to develop this gear but wish to be assured of a good price for their catches besides ice plant and cold storage facilities.

