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GUIDELINES ISSUED BY KARNATAKA PURSE SEINE FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION (MANGALORE BRANCH) TO AVOID CONFLICTS AMONG PURSE SEINE OPERATORS *

Introduction

With the introduction of purse seine fishing along the coast of Karnataka, the Karnataka Purse seine Fishermen's Association was formed in 1973 and registered in 1979 (Reg. No. 80/79-80) at Mangalore. Its objective is to serve as an organ to redress the grievances of the marine fishing community of the area in general and to provide welfare measures to the members of the Association in particular. It also endeavours to avoid clashes and conflicts among fishermen on fishing rights and to solve the complaints and

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other problems peacefully by conducting meeting whenever it is necessary. The changes in fishing methods or any reforms are discussed at these meetings. In addition to these, the Association looks after the maintenance and cleanliness of the jetty, provides drinking water facilities and makes arrangement for ice to the night fishing boats. Further, the Association brings to the notice of the Government, the problems, such as dredging of bar mouth and subsidy for diesel and takes action accordingly. Monetary help is given from the Relief Fund of Association to the family of the deceased fishermen who succumbs the accident at the time of fishing. At present (1990-91) 96 boat owners form the members of this Association.

As the purse seine fishing became popular and competitive, clashes among them over the fishing rights started. The Association, considering the nature and reason for such clashes and discussing the same among the members issued certain guidelines regarding the operation of purse seines based at Mangalore. While the major guidelines were being followed since they were formulated, these were reviewed when night fishing was started a few years ago and certain changes were made. The guidelines mentioned in the present account are applicable to both day and night purse seine operations except item no. 1, which is applicable to night purse seine only.

The guidelines are originally issued in Kannada in the Annual Report of the Karnataka Purse seine Fishermens' Association, Mangalore for the year 1990-91. These are translated into English by the authors, with a view to make aware of the existence of such guidelines, for avoiding conflicts and also with the hope that this may be useful as guideline in other maritime states where clashes are being reported among fishermen and where such guidelines are not available at present.

The guidelines are functionally followed by the purse seine operators based at Mangalore. However, non-co-operation of these guidelines on certain occasions has been reported, but all these cases have been settled amicably.

Guidelines and resolutions

1. Purse seine operation during night time: During September - December, the purse seine should operate only after sunrise. After sunset, they should not operate the net. However, as decided by the Association, from December first onwards, there is no restriction on fishing after sunset. If anyone goes against this decision of fishing in September, October and November those purse seiners will have to pay the value of entire fish catch to the Association. In addition, they have to pay Rs. 1,000/- as penalty. 25% of the value of the fish catch and 50% of additional penalty fee will be given to the party who have brought the complaint.

2. When two boats go together in the same direction and sight a fish shoal, priority should be given to the boat which is nearer to the inner side of the shoal and start paying off the net encircling the shoal. This boat has the right to operate first.

3. When two boats are coming in opposite directions (south-north or east-west) towards a fish shoal, priority should be given to the boat which is close to the shoal and this boat will operate first. If anybody goes against the above rule and operate the net without following it, the party that actually has the right of operating the net should not quarrel with other party. If the party quarrels with the opponent (who has the right), the quarrelled party has to pay Rs. 1,000/- as penalty, in addition to 75% of the value of the fish to the Association and 25% of the value of the fish would go to the party that has operated the net illegally. Under this circumstance, if the party which has the right to operate files a complaint against the other party with proof to the Association, 50% of the value of the fish should be given to the complained party, 25% to the boat people who have operated the net illegally and 25% to the Association.

4. If another boat is interfering in the area where one purse seine is shooting the net, the encroacher will have to pay a penalty of Rs. 1,000/-. 

5. Whenever a boat is fishing for catfishes and other larger fishes, and gets a substantial catch which could not be taken by the purse seine boat or attached carrier boat and at that point, another boat can catch the excess fish from the net of first boat and the total value of the fish thus procured should be shared equally between the two boats.

6. When the shoal sighted by a carrier boat and the purse seine boat belonging to this party is not in the vicinity, the other purse seiners can
operate the net by taking permission from that
carrier boat. In such cases 1/4 of the value of the
fish has to be given to the carrier boat that sights
the shoal. If the said carrier boat is empty, they
must transport the fish caught by the purse
seiners. If it is already loaded and unable to
transport the fish, the boat which has operated
the net must give 1/3 of the share to the carrier
boat. If the other purse seiners operate without
taking permission from the carrier boat, after
taking the share of workers, 50% of the fish value
should be given to the carrier boat which sighted
the shoal, 25% to the purse seiners who operated
the net and 25% to the Association.

7. Whenever catfish or other fishes are
sighted by the trawlers of indigenous boats, they
may inform the nearby purse seiners to operate
the net or with the permission of the trawlers or
indigenous boats, the purse seiners can catch the
fish. In such cases, the fish catch will be loaded
to the boat's capacity. Deducting this from
remaining value of fish, 10% of the fish value
should be given to the boat crew who sighted the
shoal. If the catch is more, the trawlers or
indigenous boats have to carry the fish to the
shore but the entire value should be given to the
purse seiners.

8. Purse seiners should not interfere by
fishing in an area where Rampanti fishermen are
either waiting for a shoal or shooting the net. If
anyone defies this rule and the information
brought to the notice of the Association with proof
by the Rampanti fishermen, the purse seiners will
have to pay the total value of the fish caught and
an additional penalty of Rs. 1,000/- to the
Rampanti owners.

9. Purse seiners are prohibited from keep­
ing the fish in water throughout the night and
unloading the same next morning. If the fish
catch is more, they should unload before
midnight of the same day. If the fish has been
caught by another boat, 1/3 of the value of loaded
fish should go to purse seiners and 2/3 of the
value should be given to the boat which has
transported the fish to the jetty (this rule will be
applicable only in the case of oil sardine,
mackerel and other small fish). If anyone goes
against this rule, they have to pay the full value
of the fish and Rs. 1,000/- as additional penalty
to the Association. If a complaint is lodged
against the boat which has not followed this rule,
25% of the impounded fish and 50% of the
penalty of Rs. 1,000/- will be paid to the party.

10. No purse seiner should do the fishing
inside the bar mouth (near the river or estuary)
before 1st of September. If anyone contravenes
it and does the fishing, the full value of the fish
cought and Rs. 1,000/- as additional penalty
must be given to the Association. Those who
brought the complaint will be given 50% of the
additional penalty (i.e. 50% of Rs. 1,000/-).

11. It has been decided by the Association
on 12.8.1987 that the purse seiners should not
allow more than 10% concession after auction of
the fish. This has been unanimously agreed upon
during the annual meeting. Necessary action will
be taken against anybody who defies this rule.

12. The Ayudha Poja day in the Nava­
ratribhri festival time is declared as a compulsory
fishing holiday every year.

The guidelines thus consider matters relat­
ing to fishing in the same area, sharing of the
catch and co-operation with indigenous fishing
operations. In view of the penalties stipulated,
the purse seine operators are reported to observe
these guidelines strictly. The penalty amount
collected by the Association is utilised for the
welfare of the fishermen. The clashes occur­
ing between the boats based at Mangalore and
other nearby centres are settled amicably at the
nearest base (centre).

For further clarification on the above
guidelines, the Karnataka Purse seines Fishers'
Association (Reg.) (Mangalore Branch)
South Wharf, Bunder, Mangalore - 575 001, may
be contacted.