

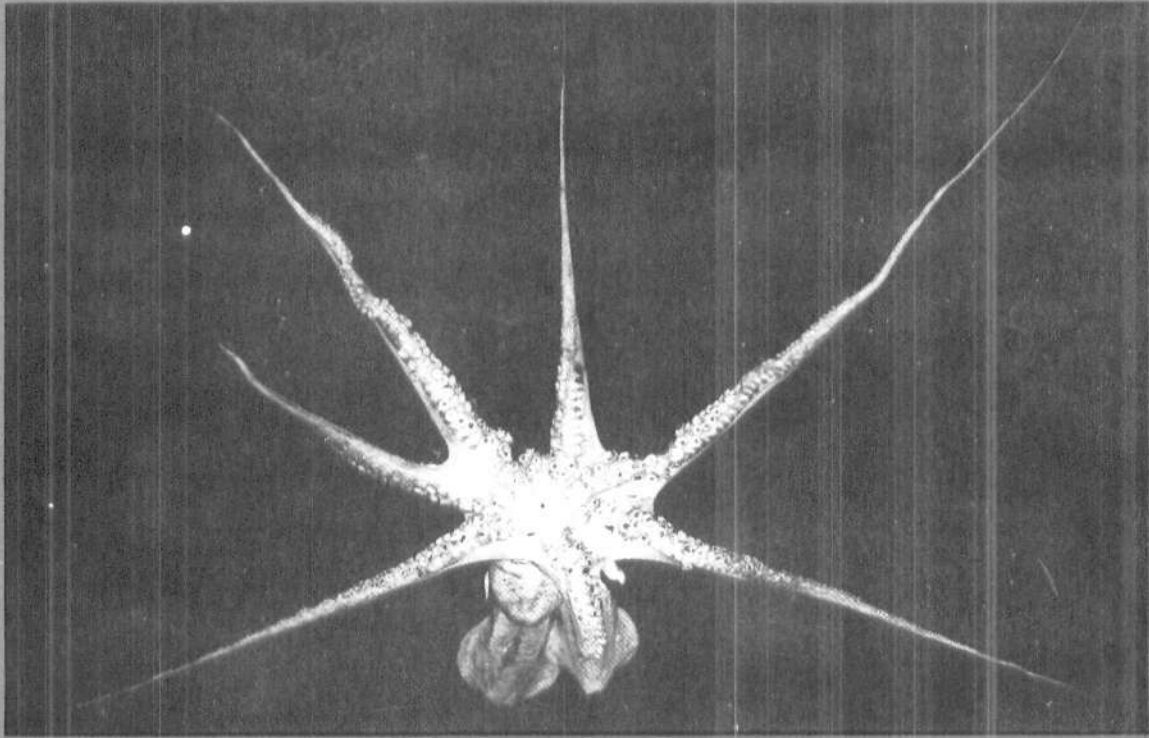


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876 A note on chank fishery in Gulf of Kutch, Gujarat

The Sacred chank, *Xancus pyrum* var. *acuta* (Bolten) is exploited commercially from the intertidal and reef habitat in the Gulf of Kutch along the Jamnagar District. Important centres of collection are Okha, Salaya, Aramda, Poshitra, Badia Is., Nora Is., Bharana, Vadinar, Sikka, Pirotan Is., Bedi, Adatra, Beyt Balapur and several small centres in the Gulf of Kutch (Fig. 1).

Fishery is mostly done by hand picking at low tides in the intertidal zones. The Sindhis, Vadhers, Medhwars and other local communities are involved in this work. Now-a-days most of the fisherwomen are also engaged in this, to enhance their economic standards. Around 50 to 60 fisherwomen are engaged in the Okha Mandal area. The annual chank production during 1975 to 1985 varied between 1,114 and 20,899 numbers, averaging 8,726. The highest yield of 20,899 nos was recorded in 1984-'85. From 1985 onwards there has been a decrease in chank production, average annual yield being 3,362 nos. Table 1 indicates the chank production in the Jamnagar district of Gujarat during 1995-'97 period.

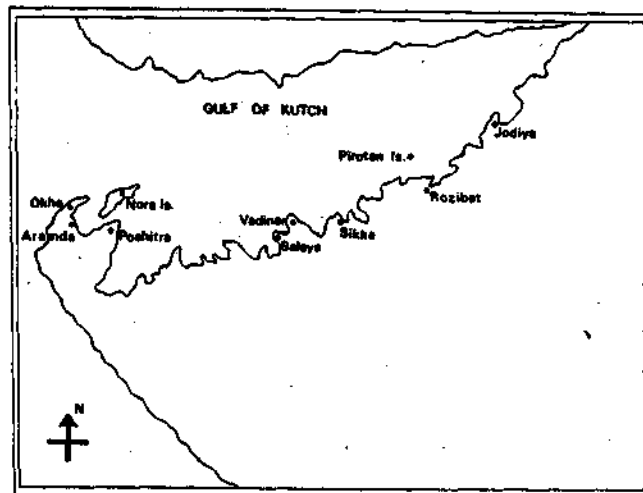


Fig. 1. Important centres of chank fishery in Jamnagar Dt. of Gujarat.

TABLE 1. Production of chank during 1975-'97 period

Year	Large	Medium	Small	Worm eaten	Total
1975-'76	1,185	6,644	192	2,368	10,389
1976-'77	122	776	12	204	1,114
1977-'78	196	1,223	10	1,153	2,582
1978-'79	1,002	4,702	194	1,372	7,270
1979-'80	465	2,126	157	1,761	4,509
1980-'81	340	2,549	1,050	2,162	6,101
1981-'82	262	1,372	5,134	3,561	10,329
1982-'83	385	1,592	4,697	4,233	10,907
1983-'84	534	2,633	6,639	4,554	14,360
1984-'85	271	2,063	8,667	9,898	20,899
1985-'86	64	639	3,276	3,552	7,531
1986-'87	117	1,045	7,874	2,031	11,067
1987-'88	37	354	2,143	408	2,942
1988-'89	38	285	2,340	593	3,257
1989-'90	19	287	1,651	835	2,792
1990-'91	5	177	2,044	1,040	3,266
1991-'92	5	136	1,671	932	2,744
1992-'93	9	63	824	1813	2709
1993-'94	13	184	2,017	827	3,041
1994-'95	7	109	2,092	1,037	3,245
1995-'96	6	79	593	447	1,125
1996-'97	nil	15	575	208	798

The chanks collected are graded according to diameter as large: 10 cm & above, medium: 8-10 cms, small: 6-8 cm, worm eaten and under sized and are purchased by Fisheries Office, Govt. Of Gujarat at fixed rates according to the size. These chanks are then auctioned mostly to Calcutta based cottage industries. The Table 2 indicates the prices prevailed during 1980 and 1977.

TABLE 2. Prices per chank in 1980 and 1977 compared

Size dia. (cm)	Price (Rs)/piece	
	1980	1977
10 & above (big)	4.00	10.00
8-10 (medium)	3.50	7.00
6-8 (small)	2.50	6.00
Worm eaten	0.80	1-2.50

Although this is a highly priced item and private entrepreneurs are willing to pay high prices for it, production trends over the last few years give reason for concern. The sudden decline in production from 1987 onwards may be either due to depletion of resource due to over-exploitation or disinterest on the part of the fishermen caused by the nominal government rates of purchase. Detailed investigations are essential to analyse the real cause for decline in production and to study the possibility of reviving/extending chank fishery in this area.

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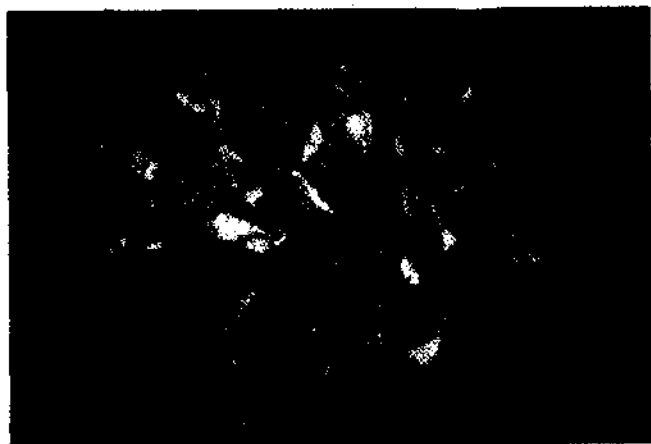


Fig. 2. A Collection of chanks.

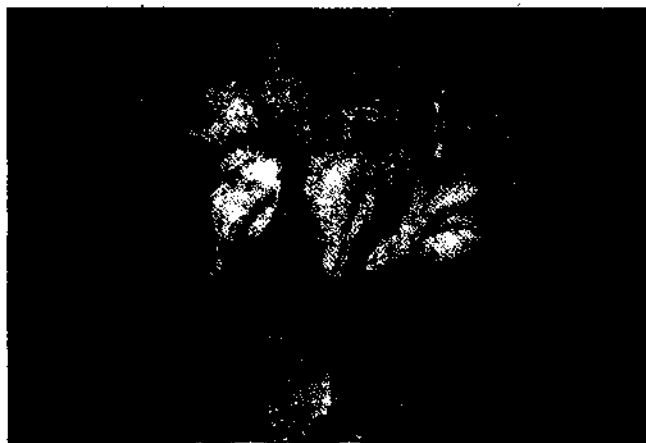


Fig. 3. A few specimens of chanks enlarged.