Maharashtra's Three Main Fish Landing Centres

The marine fisheries sector in India has witnessed a phenomenal growth during the last five decades both quantitatively and qualitatively. Among the maritime States of India, Maharashtra is one of the leading States in fish production. Maharashtra has a total of 720 km of coastline with 0.89 lakh sq. km of continental shelf. The major gears being operated from the State are trawl nets, purse seines, gill nets, dol nets and hook and lines (Singh and Kuber, 1998). There are 406 marine fishing villages across five coastal districts of Maharashtra, with a total of 65,313 fisher households in the State. The total marine fisher population in Maharashtra is 3,19,397. A total of 23,508 crafts are employed in marine fishing, of which 13,053 are mechanised, 3,382 are motorised and the rest non-motorised. Gillnetters and Dol nets account for 53%. 4219 trawlers formed 32% of the mechanised crafts (Anon, 2006).

Introduction

The annual fish production of Maharashtra ranged from 1,16,283 t in 1961 (FISHSTAT, 2004) to 3,19 lakh t during 2007 (CMFRI, 2008). The major landing centres of Maharashtra such as New Ferry Wharf, Sasoon Docks and Versova are situated in Mumbai and they account for nearly 60% of Maharashtra's fish landings (Annam and Sindhu, 2005). To get a better insight of the fishery of the State the fishing crafts and gears from these landing centres are described. The fishing area of these landing centres and fishing seasons thereof are mentioned.

New Ferry Wharf

Fishing crafts and gears: Fishing from New Ferry Wharf Landing Centre is mainly carried out by shrimp trawlers, which belong to fishermen from south Gujarat. The trawlers operated are 12.5-15 m plank-built boats in overall length (OAL) fitted with 95-120 bhp engines and with fish holding capacity of 1.5-2 tonnes. The trawl nets are 23-25 m in length with 20-25 mm cod end mesh size. The size of the otter boards used for the net is 76x165 cm while the weight of each otter board ranges from 55-80 kg. The net has a footrope of 24 m and head rope of 19-22 m.

Fishing area and season: The trawlers operated from New Ferry Wharf are those registered at ports of Gujarat State. However, a few from neighbouring ports of Mumbai also unload their catch here for marketing. About 1,000 to 1,200 trawlers are operated from this centre during the fishing season. These trawlers undertake voyage trips lasting for 6-10 days of fishing. It takes 1-2 days of steaming time to reach the fishing grounds and the actual trawling hours are 45-60 hrs/trip. The fishing area extends from south of Maharashtra coast to Ratnagiri covering an area (17°-21° N and 71°-73° E) of approximately...
55 kg attached to it. The otter boards are of 25-30 m depth in the open sea parallel to the coastline off Versova. The depth of operation as well as the number of nets operated depends upon the sea going capacity of the crafts. Generally, large sized dol net crafts (14 m OAL) use three nets simultaneously in depths varying from 15-20 m in the beginning of fishing season, but later on they operate the same nets in 25-30 m depth area. Smaller crafts use 2-3 nets in depths of 15-20 m only. Fishing activity at Versova by dol nets begins at the end of September or early October and lasts till end of May or first week of June. The dol net fishing is totally suspended from June-August being monsoon time due to inclement weather conditions.

During the period from 10th June to 15th August trawling is suspended on account of monsoon ban imposed by the State government of Maharashtra. Therefore, trawling activity commences in late August or after Narali paurnima, a traditional festival where offerings are made to the Sea God before venturing into the sea. However, majority of the trawlers undertake fishing from September to end of May of the following year.

References


