Fish technology newsletter

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The Fishermen of Pozhiyur in Trivandrum District, Kerala, are about to go to the sea with shore – seine net.

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A survey on the underutilisation of fish processing (Freezing) plants in India–II Karnataka*

Karnataka, one of the maritime States in the West coast of India, has a coast line of about 270 k. m. The Export of marine products from this State was started as early as 1962 with an earning of Rs. 0.5 million. Since then, a number of fish processing plants came into existence in this State and as a result, the total installed capacity of the plants has increased considerably. In 1979, there were 29 fish processing plants in Karnataka, processing mainly prawns, froglegs, lobster tails and occasionally squid and cuttle fish. Out of these, 18 factories belonged to 5 tonnes, 9 factories to 5–10 tonnes, and 2 factories to 10/UP tonnes capacity per day.

To estimate the idle acity of the fish proce (freezing) plants in this S 10 plants were sampled a a pre-designed sampling This included 5 plants under 5 tonnes, 3 from 5 tonnes and 2 from abov tonnes, capacity per day. required data for the were collected from these p for the years 1978 and 19

IDLE CAPACITY OF PROCESSING PLANTS IN KARNATAKA

(Based on 250 normal working days)

	Single shift		Double shift		Triple shift	
	1978	1979	1978	1979	1978	1
Total installed capacity in tonnes.	13,992	13,992	27,984	27,984	41,975	41,
Total estimated idle capacity in tonnes.	9,344	8,299	23,333	22,291	37,323	36,
% idle capacity.	66.8	59.3	83.3	79.7	88.9	86.
% idle capacity stratum-wise						
Under 5 tonnes/day.	50.2	52.7	79.2	76.3	83.4	84.
5–10 tonnes/day.	75.7	54.1	87.9	77.0	91.9	84.
above 10 tonnes/day.	92.9	90.1	96.5	95.1	97.7	96.

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a proforma through personal interviews. The total installed capacity and idle capacity were estimated for the years 1978 and 1979 for each stratum for single, double and triple shifts by taking 250 normal working days in a year.

These estimates are presented in the table. From the table it could be seen that the total installed capacity of all the plants in the State for double shift with 250 working days amounted to 28 thousand tonnes in 1979 while the total production of all the plants during the year was estimated to be only 5.7 thousand tonnes. The corresponding figures for 1978 were 28 thousand tonnes and 4.6 thousand tonnes respectively. The idle capacities of the plants in the State for 1978 and 1979 with double shift with 250 working days in a year were 83.3% and 79.7% respectively. Thus the utilised capacities were only 17% in 1978 and 20% in 1979. Compared to 1978, there was a slight improvement in capacity utilisation in 1979 due to freezing of squid, cuttlefish, pomfret and other fishes by a few plants. The stratum-wise break-up figures for 1979 showed that idle capacity was comparatively less in plants under 5 tonnes capacity per day for all the three shifts. The maximum idle capacity was noticed in plants above 10 tonnes per day.

The major factors responsible for idle capacity of the plants in this State were non availability of raw material (prawn) and the high cost of production (due to increase in HSD oil and scarcity of raw material.)

Taking the raw material to neighbouring States, lack of cold storage facilities, labour troubles and storage of ice were other factors contributing to the large idle capacity of the fish processing plants in this State.

Based on the survey, following are a few recommendations which may help to reduce the idle capacity of the plants in this State.

(1) Promoting mass aqua culture of prawns

(2) Diversification of products

(3) Subsidy on diesel oil to fishing boats

(4) A check on issuing licence to new entrepreneurs.