



Central Institute of Fisheries Technology
CIFT Junction, Matsyapuri P.O., Cochin - 682 029

SPECIAL ISSUE

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National Seminar on Indian Seafood Trade - Concerns and Adaptive Strategies

Recommendations of the
seminar



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National Seminar on Indian Seafood Trade - Concerns and Adaptive Strategies

30 June 2011, Cochin, India
organized by

**Society of Fisheries Technologists (India)
&
Central Institute of Fisheries Technology**

A one day National Seminar on "Indian Seafood Trade - Concerns and Adaptive Strategies" was held at CIFT, Cochin on 30th June 2011. The seminar was jointly organized by the Society of Fisheries Technologists (India) (SOFTI), Cochin and the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Cochin. The main objectives of the seminar were to take stock of the present status of Indian seafood trade; to examine various issues of barriers to trade and to discuss the steps required to make this sector sustainable. To meet these objectives, experts in the field of seafood trade, academicians, and researchers presented invited papers on selected topics of current relevance to the seafood trade. About 80 delegates participated in the seminar. Dr. T.K. Srinivasa Gopal, Director, CIFT and Dr. M.K. Mukundan, President, SOFTI chaired the Technical Session. The seminar began with Dr. Nikita Gopal, Senior Scientist, CIFT & Convener of the Seminar, welcoming the invited speakers, Chairs and delegates.

Shri Anwar Hashim, National President Sea Food Exporters Association of India (SEAI) presented an overview of the present status of Indian seafood



Technical session in progress



Shri Anwar Hashim presenting an overview of present status of Indian seafood trade

trade tracing its chequered history. He explained that the Indian seafood exports continue unabated even with the global economic turmoil and touched \$ 2.8 billion mark with a growth rate of 26.90% in value terms. However, to sustain the same growth rate in future, he suggested that there is a need for increasing governmental support like treating the seafood industry as an agricultural activity, diplomatic negotiations for market access and reasonable import regulations, and decreasing credit interest rates and continuing some of the subsidies. Moreover, there is an urgent need to develop commercial models of the different technologies suitable for Indian conditions in the interest of the industry and environment.

Dr. Ram Mohan, Deputy Director, Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Cochin, highlighted the export trends during the past decade explaining the reasons. The dynamics of export with



Dr. Ram Mohan highlighting the export trends in seafood during the past decade



Session Chairs Dr. T.K. Srinivasa Gopal, Director, CIFT and Dr. M.K. Mukundan, President, SOFTI during the discussions

various markets was discussed in the light of changing global economic equations. He also stressed the need to diversify exports for tapping the potential of emerging markets in Afro-Asian and Latin American countries. Value addition and product diversification is important to create a brand image for the products and to grab increased market share.

Shri Sebastian Mathew, Programme Advisor, International Collective in Support of Fish Workers, Chennai, discussed the aspect of subsidies in fisheries in the context of WTO. Although many countries agree that over-exploitation of fishery resources was exaggerated by subsidies, there are sustainable resources like that in India. WTO has classified certain subsidies as prohibitive. But, there are certain provisions for special and differential treatments which should be utilized by India. India needs to take a proactive stand in the WTO debate on subsidies to ensure that the benefits of Special and Differential Treatment status for the developing countries like India are obtained on account of artisanal/small scale fishing, development priorities, poverty alleviation and livelihood, and food security concerns. Moreover, schemes for strengthening fishery management systems, vessel monitoring system and selective fishing systems should be promoted. He has pointed out various aspects that can be brought under subsidies like operating costs, on-shore activities, fuel costs, and infrastructure.

Dr. A. Ramachandran, Director, School of Industrial Fisheries, CUSAT, Cochin, highlighted the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and its impact on Indian seafood trade. He explained the FTAs that various countries have entered into and discussed the impact of these FTAs. He highlighted the Indo-ASEAN FTA and discussed the possible impacts on the fisheries sector.

Dr. K. Ashok Kumar, Senior Scientist, CIFT explained the emerging scenario of traceability in the light of consumer right to information. As many of the importing countries are imposing traceability on seafood items, and are also ready to pay premium price for such products, we should prepare the ground to exploit the situation. Although many systems are in place already, we are not able to follow them as such because of regulatory, financial and technological hurdles in implementation. He also insisted that a robust, appropriate and cost-effective seafood traceability system meeting international standards based on latest advances in Information and Communication Technologies and Radio Frequency Identification tags needs to be evolved and implemented for Indian fisheries and aquaculture.

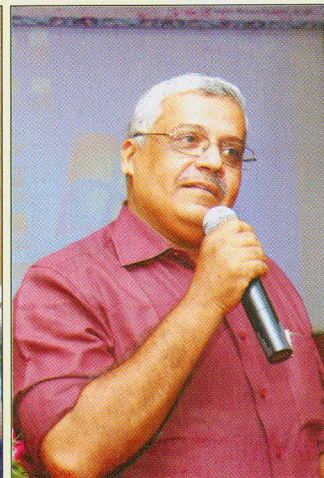
Dr. M.E. John, Zonal Director (Retd.), Fishery Survey of India, Mumbai discussed the issue of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This has become an emerging issue due to over-exploitation of fishery stocks and increasing environmental pollution. He said that in the context of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995) and its overall objective of sustainable fisheries, the issue of IUU fishing in world fisheries is of serious and increasing concern. IUU fishing undermines efforts to conserve and manage fish stocks in capture fisheries. When confronted with IUU fishing, national and regional fisheries management organizations can fail to achieve management goals. IUU fishing takes place where vessels operate in violation of the laws and rules of fishery. This can apply to fisheries that are under the jurisdiction of a coastal state or to high sea fisheries regulated by regional fisheries management organizations. IUU fishing puts unsustainable pressure on fish stocks. He discussed the various responsibilities and measures to control IUU fishing.



Dr. E.G. Silas, Former VC, KAU clarifies a point from Shri Sebastian Mathew, Programme Advisor, ICSFW, Chennai



Dr. A. Ramachandran



Dr. K. Ashok Kumar

Dr. T.V. Sankar, Head, Quality Assurance and Management, CIFT, Cochin presented the overall picture of quality issues. He covered the topics like recent amendments/changes in quality systems, export rejections from India, private food standards and seafood fraud. Although a lot of quality measures were put in place, there were 65 import refusals by USA and 25 rejections by EU countries. Moreover, the quality standards are becoming more stringent every year. In this context, it is essential for Indian export industry to improve the product quality following strict HACCP system.

Recommendations of the seminar

The following recommendations emerged from the talks given in the technical sessions and suggestions by the house during the plenary session:

1. There is a need for increasing governmental support to ensure that the fisheries sector grow on a consistent basis. The Duty Entitlement Pass Book scheme may be continued to maintain the overall health of the seafood industry. There is also a need to develop commercial models of the different technologies in the interest of the industry and environment.
2. There is a need to diversify markets for tapping the potential of emerging markets in Afro-Asian and Latin American countries. Product diversification is important to create a brand image for the products and to get increased market share.
3. India needs to take a proactive stand in the WTO debate on subsidies to ensure that the benefits of special and differential treatment status for the developing countries like India are obtained on account of artisanal/small scale fishing, development priorities, poverty alleviation and



Dr. M.E. John



Dr. T.V. Sankar

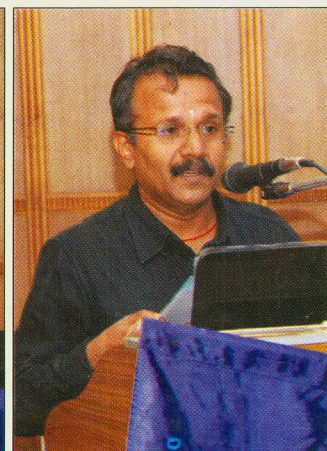
livelihood and food security concerns and for promoting schemes for strengthening fishery management systems, Vessel Monitoring System and selective fishing systems.

4. Impediments faced by the export industry like unbalanced supply and unstable price of raw materials and consequent low capacity utilization of processing plants need to be mitigated by price support mechanisms, enhanced aquaculture production for emerging species like tilapia and facilitating selective imports of raw materials for value addition and exports.
5. Schemes for promoting production and export of bivalves may be taken up with plans for certification of water bodies for culture operations by a competent national agency.
6. Schemes for utilization of fishery waste may be given top priority in order to reduce the environmental impact and increase profitability of post processing operations.
7. In this era of globalization, India needs to look at Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in view of increasing international and regional competition. Prior impact analysis need to be undertaken before implementation of FTAs in order to study possible negative impacts on the local production and processing and marketing establishments and dependent stakeholders and to optimize FTAs to national advantage giving due protection under exclusion list for traditional and vulnerable industries like agriculture or fisheries.
8. The standards imposed by importing countries are often not based on international health standards and tend to produce trade barriers. The exporting countries should join together and negotiate through inter-governmental platforms for harmonization of standards for seafood quality and trade and to ensure that it does not lead to trade barriers.
9. A robust, appropriate and cost-effective seafood traceability system meeting international standards based on latest advances in Information Communication Technologies and Radio Frequency Identification tags need to be evolved and implemented for Indian fisheries and aquaculture. CIFT can take a lead in this area in collaboration with MPEDA.
10. A National Plan of Action needs to be evolved in harmony with International Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal Unregulated and Unreported fishing in Indian EEZ and along with a regional plan of action in collaboration with neighbouring countries for controlling IUU fishing in Indian Ocean region.
11. The exporting country should adhere to seafood HACCP system to harmonize and facilitate trade and to ensure seafood safety.

The seminar concluded with a formal vote of thanks proposed by Shri T.N. Venugopal, General Manager, Samrat Middle East Exports Pvt. Ltd., Cochin & Co-convener of the seminar.



Dr. Nikita Gopal - Welcome Address



Shri T.N. Venugopal - Vote of Thanks

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