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Sustainable Aquaculture for a Secure Future

Title: International Seafood and Its Impacts on Fisheries and Fishing Communities in India

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Abstract: This paper makes an attempt to examine the emergence of international trade in seafood and its impacts on the fisheries and fishing communities in India. It suggests some measures and strategies to maximize the benefits through sustainable fisheries development. Seafood is one of the leading non-traditional exports identified by the Government of India. Until 1960s, much importance was not attached towards export trade in general. With the changed policy of Government, seafood was considered as one of the thrust areas for augmenting exports; consequently, earning of foreign exchange was made as one of the basic objectives of marine fisheries development. Efforts were made to increase fish production, especially of shrimp, whose unit value was far higher in the international markets. Different kinds of fishing vessels including small mechanized boats, sona boats, larger deep sea trawlers were deployed and almost all of them confined their fishing operations to the inshore regions of the sea. Consequently, the production of fish as well as shrimp have gone up manifold thus enhancing the quantum and value of exports. However, the excessive fishing effort and over fishing in the inshore regions brought down the production levels leading to depletion and stagnation. No doubt the international trade has positively created massive infrastructure and employment besides huge foreign exchange earnings. But the over fishing has forced to withdraw some of the larger and mini-trawlers and the industry has suffered with shortage of raw material for the trade. Shrimp farming was taken up on a larger scale to offset the shortage but unplanned growth of the same met with disease attack and Supreme Court's restrictions on environmental considerations. The paper further discussed the negative as well as positive impacts encountered by the fishermen due to mechanization and shrimp

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farming on the one hand and that of Tsunami and WTO on the other and suggested remedial measures. Keywords: International trade, seafood, mechanization, shrimp farming, tsunami, WTO.

This abstract was excerpted from the original poster, which was published in the Proceedings of the 14th Biennial Conference of the International Institute of Fisheries Economics & Trade, 22-25 July 2008: Achieving a Sustainable Future: Managing Aquaculture, Fishing, Trade and Development, October 2008, <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/IIFET/html/publications.html>.

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