

Bay of Bengal Programme

Small-Scale Fisherfolk Communities

IMPROVING MARKETING CONDITIONS FOR

WOMEN FISH VENDORS IN BESANT NAGAR, MADRAS

BOBP/WP/66



BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME
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GCP/RAS/1 18/MUL

**IMPROVING MARKETING CONDITIONS FOR
WOMEN FISH VENDORS IN BESANT NAGAR, MADRAS**

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Bay of Bengal Programme for Fisheries Development. Madras, April 1991
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In August 1990, a fish market run exclusively by *women* fish vendors came up in Besant Nagar, Madras. This paper describes why the market was needed, the activities that culminated in the setting up of the market, the role of various organizations, and their perceptions of the process by which the market became a reality.

The market was constructed by the Corporation of Madras. The Bay of Bengal Programme for Fisheries Development (BOBP), provided expertise, including the services of a social worker to help train the women in community organization; it also helped the women liaise with the Corporation and other organizations', and provided the Corporation with a draft design for the market. The Fisheries Department extended its co-operation and assistance, particularly in the training of women.

On behalf of BOBP, Ms N Valli, social worker, helped to train the fisherwomen, and coordinate with the Corporation of Madras and other authorities. Mr. A Alexander, community organizer, helped conduct the participatory survey of the Besant Nagar community's needs and problems. Mr Philip Townsley, Sociologist (APO), monitored the project. Fr. Elias of Lovola College helped conduct training sessions. Various Corporation officials—Mr L.M. Menez 's, Ms Shanta Sheela Nair, Mr V. Manivannan—extended their cooperation at various stages to make the market possible.

The activities in connection with the fish market were sponsored by "Small-scale fisherfolk communities in the Bay of Bengal", GCP/RAS/1 18/MUL, which is the BOBP's main project.

The BOBP is a regional fisheries programme which covers seven countries around the Bay of Bengal—Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand. The Programme plays a catalytic and consultative role: it develops, demonstrates and promotes new techniques, technologies or ideas to help improve the conditions of small scale fisherfolk communities in member-countries. The **BOBP** is sponsored by the governments of Denmark, Sweden and United Kingdom, by member-governments in the Bay of Bengal region, and also by UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), AGFUND (Arab Gulf Fund for United Nations Development Organizations) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The main executing agency is the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

This document is a working paper, and has not been cleared by the **FAO** or by the governments concerned.

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Above: Before the market – the women fish vendors of Orur and Olcott Kuppam sell fish on the roadside.



Left: The women approach the Co,poration of Madras to urge them to construct a fish market.



The women undergo training in community organisation.





Above: The market is inaugurated. One of the women speaks on behalf of the group of 44 who constitute the “Mahalir manram” or women’s association.

Below: The women pose outside their market.



THE WOMEN FISH VENDORS OF BESANT NAGAR

Here are the 44 women, of Orur and Olcott Kuppam near Besant Nagar, who strove for a fish market and got it.



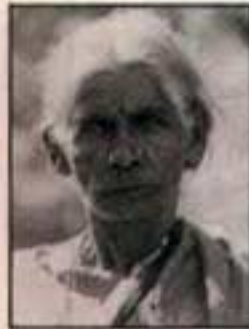
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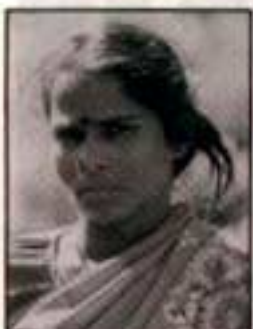
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Kousalya



Desam



Machagandhi



Parameswari



Papamma



Desapattu



Kaniamma



Lakshmi



Vasantha



Bhoopathy P



Kanaka



Bhoopathy V



Pattamma



Selvi



Desamma



Bhoopathy K



Pushpa



Rajamba



Pattu



Customers patronize the market.

