

5

WORKING WITH CLIENTS: THE DEMAND SIDE

In Chapter 4, we discussed the various extension methods that can be applied in fisheries extension. Usually, a national fisheries extension service plans and manages the fisheries extension programmes to be implemented nation-wide or in certain specific areas. The involvement of the FEA will vary according to the scope of the programme and the extension methods used. For mass media methods, such as radio or the production of pamphlets, FEA involvement will be relatively low, whereas for individual extension methods it will be high.

Apart from programmes planned by the extension service, initiatives for fisheries extension can be taken by the fisherfolk or by the FEA. These initiatives are, initially, to be implemented on the local scale only. It generally then depends on the personal commitment and initiative of the FEA to organize extension services that result from such local initiatives, *FOR EXAMPLE, field extension workshops or excursions.*

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, programmes planned at the national level do not always appear to be of immediate or short-term benefit to those on the beach. This is particularly true of legislation. Yet, management of the common fish resource often requires legislation, such as, *FOR EXAMPLE, a law that forbids the*

use of set bagnets below a certain mesh size, aimed at protecting juveniles from being caught. Legislation, then, is one of the intervention instruments used in a fisheries development programme. But fisheries extension programmes should go hand-in-hand with such legislation. *FOR EXAMPLE, when related to trawling or ringnet fishing, certain trawl or ringnet fishermen may not like such a programme because it would make their fishing more expensive (when the licence fee for these nets is increased) or it may make fishing impossible (when a complete ban is in force). However, in the long run preservation of the fish resource would be beneficial for those fishermen or their children.* And it is to explain the complicated, and often unfathomable, aspects of fisheries legislation and regulations that fisheries extension often has to be conducted. To explain the purpose of sound regulations and to provide information on alternative (fishing) activities is indeed a challenge for the fisheries extension service.

But whether the initiatives for the extension activity come from the national level, or from the clients, or from the FEA, the agent has to work with his or her clients. Even national extension programmes can be successful only when the FEA is able to tailor the extension message to the situation, to the levels of knowledge and skills to the attitudes and behaviour of the various clients. *FOR EXAMPLE, it is of little use to provide basic skills on the operation and maintenance of outboard engines to fishermen who already have those skills.*

Negative attitudes of clients towards certain programmes can be because they have inadequate information to judge the benefits of the programme or may have had bad experiences with similar programmes in the past. Hence, the FEA has to work closely with his or her clients to build confidence. How the FEA should go about working with his or her clients is discussed in the rest of this chapter.

The principle of the client's self-reliance in decision-making

The FEA basically offers a service to individual clients or to specific target groups. A very important principle of fisheries extension

services is that it should help the clients to remain, or to become, self-reliant decision-makers in improving the economics of their fisheries activities. In some countries, it has been a tradition to offer government services to people in such a way that the people have become dependent on these services. For certain sectors, such as health and education, it is usual for people to become **dependent** on the basic facilities offered by the government. But when it concerns economic enterprises, and each fishing unit is an economic enterprise, such dependency is likely to be disadvantageous in the long run⁴.

Each enterprise requires constant investment (however small), as well as decision-making on how such investment should be made in the most economical way. By issuing subsidized fishing equipment, or by outsiders (such as the FEA) making decisions for the fisherfolk on how to proceed with the enterprise, the dependency of the fisherfolk on the government increases. As a result, the client may become reluctant to think about future investments or make decisions, as they would expect government, at least partly, to take care of it. This can be detrimental to the enterprise, especially because government services may not arrive in time. Also, the provision of these services is a relatively costly public expenditure. However, in recent years, awareness of these disadvantages has grown and now there is more support to the principle of self-reliance, as *FOR EXAMPLE in a recent, Shri scheme Of credit to fisherfolk.*

Making decisions for a client may give the individual FEA a sense of authority, because it makes him or her directly responsible for the benefits attributed to these decisions. But, the FEA should take a modest position, and the responsibility for decision-making should be left as much as possible to the client. The following *EXAMPLE* will illustrate this:

A FEA has given advice to a client on how to make better quality

⁴ In the previous chapter we have excused (very) low income groups getting subsidies, but this arises more from a welfare point of view than that from any aims to build up viable fishing enterprises.

dried fish than she was making before. *The client succeeds in making the better quality processed fish. But there is no direct market for it in the village because of the high price. The FEA, by chance, knows a shopkeeper in a nearby town and gets him interested in the dried fish. The agent negotiates the price, the quantity and other terms with the shopkeeper, because his client has no experience of such dealings. From time to time, the agent helps to mediate between his client and the shopkeeper, especially when problems arise.*

After one year, the FEA is selected by the national extension service to participate in a three-month in-service training in the capital. During this period, his client and the shopkeeper again have problems in their trade relationship. The client is dissatisfied with the price she is getting for her dried fish and the shopkeeper maintains that he will buy from her only if she can guarantee a regular supply. The client appeals to the FEA, several times for assistance, but he has no time to visit the village because of his training programme, which also includes multiday fishing trips.

After a few months, the relationship between the client and the shopkeeper deteriorates to the extent that the shopkeeper decides to buy dried fish from another supplier. The fish processor has to stop her business, because she does not know of any other sales outlet, and, even if she knows one, she feels that she would not be able to negotiate a price that would allow her to make a profit.

In this case, although the efforts of the FEA are laudable, some important aspects have not been taken into account. What we learn from this experience is that the FEA is, often, in one duty station only for a relatively short period. Six years in one area may seem long, but when compared to the lifetime of a fishing or fish processing enterprise, which can go on from generation to generation, this is a short period. Hence, the FEA should have, in this case, taught his client how she could independently market her fish. This would have included how to find a market, how to negotiate with traders, and, in general, how to improve the management of her business, *FOR EXAMPLE, how to ensure a regular*

supply or how to keep stocks. It is very likely that the FEA may not have known much about these **business aspects**, in which case he should have called for assistance of experts, perhaps from the village or the nearby town or even the shopkeeper himself.

Assessing the real needs and analyzing the problem

As discussed, the more the clients are willing to contribute to the extension service, the more effective the extension service will be and the more cost-effective too. However, for a FEA to make the extension service as effective as possible and to motivate the clients to generate **on** their own as much of the resources as required, the agent should know well what the client's real needs are.

The FEA can assist his or her clients to formulate their needs precisely. The agent may often receive requests for certain training, when people feel that such training may help them to start income-generating activities or improve their income. But what do these clients actually expect? *FOR EXAMPLE, when field training courses in net-mending and repair were organized for female participants in 17 certain area, the participants asked the organizers, when the course was finished, what they were supposed to do with their newly-acquired skills.* In this case, the FEA may have given them the wrong expectations, but certainly the real needs of the participants were not adequately assessed or discussed. Clearly, their needs were to find employment or to start income-generating activities and this meant going beyond skill-training alone.

The FEA's mandate does not include finding employment for his or her clients; he or she is meant only to provide extension services to enable the clients to make optimum use of their capabilities and resources in finding employment or in improving existing income-generating activities. It is, therefore, very important that the FEA assesses these capabilities and resources, and discusses with the clients possible ways to improve their situation. In other words, the FEA and the clients have to, together, conduct **a problem analysis. It is impossible to help clients without discussing their real situation.**

In finding possible solutions to the clients' problems and needs, the FEA should always question whether extension is, indeed, a part of the solution. In Chapter 2 we had stated that "extension tries to bring about changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and/or behaviour". We have, accordingly, already discussed what extension can do and what it cannot do and found it cannot provide resources or employment. But it can give information to clients on how to mobilize their resources and, when required, how to obtain such outside resources as credit.

FOR EXAMPLE, the FEA cannot provide credit for a client to replace an inboard engine, but, if appropriate, he or she can advise the client on possible solutions to overcome this problem:

- *FIRSTLY, on how to better operate and maintain the engine - to prolong its life;*
- *SECONDLY, on how to generate regular savings in such a way that the engine can be replaced from the client's own resources; and*
- *THIRDLY, if possible, on how to contact banks to obtain a bank loan to replace the engine.*

The appropriate solution must be arrived at only after discussing with the client his capabilities and resources.

The FEA is not always expected to work on the request of individuals or groups of clients. Especially in the context of a national fisheries extension programme, certain targets or extension aims have to be reached, *FOR EXAMPLE, related to an increased use of safety measures at sea or an increase in demersal fishing in the inshore waters.* If individual or group extension methods are to be used for such a programme, the FEA will have to search for the would-be clients of the programme, and this is not possible.

It is very important in this case that the extension services are provided in such a way that they suit the needs of the clients as much as possible. Otherwise, the clients will just ignore the advice and may lose faith in the service provided by the Fisheries Agency. Unless, of course, the clients **have to** follow the advice due to any

fisheries legislation that goes with it. If it appears that a programme is not well designed, because it does not suit the needs and capabilities of the clients or target groups, the FEAs should be in a position to discuss this with their superiors and colleagues. This could be discussed at the regular fisheries district meetings, if such meetings are held. And if these problems are recognized on a wider scale, the national fisheries extension service could make the appropriate adjustments where possible.

Working with client groups & village organizations

Just as with individual extension, group extension can be initiated on the request of clients or by the FEA (whether in the context of a national extension programme or not). Requests from clients can come in various ways. In some cases, an individual, or a few persons who know each other, can come with the request, in other cases the request can come from a village-level organization. In most countries, there is a variety of village-level and island-level organizations, and people are generally familiar with them. The organization or society can be related to the government, such as the Gramodaya Mandalaya in Shri Lanka, it can be related to the Ministry or Department of Fisheries, such as the fisheries cooperative, or it can be non-governmental, such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

If the request for extension on a certain topic comes, or a group of clients have expressed a problem in the field of fisheries, the FEA, together with those making the request, should first undertake a thorough problem analysis and needs assessment. After this, it should be collectively decided what could be done to solve the problem and whether extension is indeed necessary. And if extension is a possible means of solving the problem, it should be decided whether the proposed extension activities are financially feasible. Can the participants shoulder part of or all the costs? Is there a government budget available to cover part of the costs? What alternative extension activities can be suggested if the costs involved are too high?

We have already discussed problem analysis in Chapter 3. On the facing page is a form that can be used as a frame for problem

Problem Analysis Form

(A) Key problem		(B) Causes of (A)		(C) Groups responsible for (B)		(D) Behaviour of (C) which results in (B)		(E) Factors necessary to correct (B)		(F) What extension can do to correct (D)
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analysis. Such an analysis can be done by the extension experts of the national fisheries extension service, for the planning of extension programmes, but problem analysis is also the main tool for identification of extension activities at the field level.

For some group extension methods, there are no, or hardly any, limitations to the number of participants. *FOX EXAMPLE, if a group of persons wish to become better informed about the procedures of a newly-started fisheries credit scheme, the FEA can assist in organizing an information meeting with responsible bank officers from a nearby town.* The only limitations with respect to the number of participants, in such a case, is likely to be based on accommodation available; it would not be necessary to select participants. To make the proper arrangements, however, it is recommended that some idea of how many people will come is obtained sufficiently early; if there appears to be too many for an effective meeting, then two or more meetings could be organized.

However, when it comes to group extension methods such as excursions and, especially, field workshops, there will inevitably be limitations to the number of participants. *FOR EXAMPLE, in a workshop on the operation and main tenance of outboard engines, only a selected number of persons can participate, depending on the type of workshop, the number of trainers available, the material available and the accommodation.* But even if there is room for many, it is a good idea to keep in mind, that when a FEA is just starting with fisheries extension in a certain area, or when the extension methods used are new to both the agent and the area, it is best to start with small groups. It is also very important that only committed persons, and persons who most need the information most, participate. Hence, **a good selection process is very important** in the past, FEAs have often not taken this selection process seriously, but it is one of the most important keys to successful extension.

If a good selection is required, it would be easier if the village-level or island-level society does the selection. Society representatives know their members well and can contact them more easily. But the FEA will have to judge, through discussions with representatives of the society and its members, whether the society is indeed able to make a good selection.

A good selection can be hampered due to two reasons:

- FIRSTLY, the FEA does not take the extension effort very seriously and transfers this attitude to his or her clients. As a result, the client, or society, is not motivated sufficiently to indulge in the time-consuming process of selecting committed and needed persons.
- SECONDLY, the request may be from a weak society which does not have the sound support of its members. If all its members are not in some way actively involved in the society, it is often difficult to arrange discussions on new activities, such as the planned field extension workshop.

Due to these reasons, there results a bad selection of participants, based on favour and friendship, rather than on objective assessment of the commitment and needs of the individual members.

If the request does not come from an organized group, such as a society, or if the society itself is not able to make a sound selection of participants, the FEA should assist in the selection process. Discussions should be held with the persons who requested for the extension services and it should be decided what is expected from the participants and what selection procedures should be applied. The following are important considerations for a sound selection procedure:

- The way information about the field extension workshop is diffused in the village. *FOR EXAMPLE, through notice boards, by informing key persons, during a society meeting or during a specially organized information meeting.*
- Eligibility and selection criteria. *FOR EXAMPLE, should the*

person be a member of the society or is that not necessary, should the person be involved in fishing or fishing-related activities etc.

- The way interested persons should apply. *FOR EXAMPLE, if an information meeting is held about the field workshop, can interested persons put their names down on a list or should they write to the organizers and explain why they are interested in participating.*
- The manner of selection from among the applicants. *FOR EXAMPLE, is the society forming a special committee for the organization of this workshop and will that committee decide, or who else will decide.*

It is important that the clients, themselves, whether society members or not, decide about the selection procedures and that the FEA only helps them by offering guidance in this decision-making process. The agent should ensure that decisions are made on the most salient issues, and that the decision-making is not dominated by one or by just a few.

For the potential participants to make a sound decision on whether they would like to participate or not, it is important that they are well informed about these aspects of the workshop:

- What is its purpose;
- What are the arrangements;
- What are they expected to contribute; and
- How long it will take.

If provision is not made for a daily allowance for participants (and an allowance is, in general, not advocated here), this should be made clear, so as not to attract non-committed persons or persons who drop out once the workshop has begun.

At least one discussion will have to be held with the selected participants before the workshop starts. It would be most advantageous if the trainer(s) could be present at this meeting as well; if they are not, the outcome should be communicated to them.

This discussion will serve to further discuss

- The purpose of the workshop;
- What the participants actually expect from it;
- How they plan to use the acquired skills; and
- What topics should be dealt with in the workshop.

The arrangements for the workshop should be decided upon at this meeting. These may include the following:

- The time most convenient to the participants.
- The place the workshop will be held.
- The material required and what the participants can contribute towards this (*FOR EXAMPLE, used outboard engines for a workshop on operation and maintenance of outboard engines*).
- Storage facilities, if necessary, for equipment and material during the workshop.
- Supply of food and refreshments to participants.
- Accommodation for the trainers, if necessary.

The FEA will have to ensure that the most important topics are indeed discussed at this meeting and that the discussion is not dominated by just a few persons only.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that there are quite a lot preparations to be made before a workshop or even an excursion is organized. But good preparation will, in most cases, ensure a good result. However, one question that arises is whether the FEA does have the time for such time-consuming community work. Unfortunately, if such time is not found, it will not be possible to organize a sound workshop or excursion.

Working with adults

One of the most important features of fisheries extension is that the clients are usually adults. However, there may be occasions when children are the target group. *FOR EXAMPLE, fo increase*

awareness of the vulnerability of fish resources and f/ic effects of pollution
Oil these resources, the extension service may decide to support a school programme. In the field, however, the FEA normally works only with adults.

Working with adults requires a different approach to working with children. The principal differences are that extension for adults:

- does not involve coercion of any sort, but depends on voluntary participation; and
- should have a practical message that will be implemented by the target group within a certain period of time.

We cannot force the target group to use the information provided. Rather, it is up to the clients themselves to decide whether they would like to participate in a particular extension effort or not, and, if so, whether the information is useful enough for them to apply it. It is, therefore, extremely important that the extension activities are organized by the FEA with the assistance of the clients or, even better, by the clients themselves with the help of the FEA. The FEA must realize that fisherfolk are the best experts on their situation. The practical applicability of the extension message can only be assured when the FEA

- learns about the particular situation of his or her clients,
- takes sufficient time to listen to the reasons why the situation has evolved the way it has, and
- makes the appropriate extension efforts if change is called for.

Inappropriate efforts can result not only in the clients just ignoring the information provided them, but may even have negative effects. Clients may already have put their resources into a recommended practice, *FOR EXAMPLE*, by buying a certain fishing gear and may stand to lose by following the recommendation. OR the recommendation may not benefit the target group but might help those who do not necessarily need it and, thus, worsen the situation of the target group. *FOR EXAMPLE*, uncontrolled support of plans to increase the

number of mechanized craft has often resulted in ~~poor~~ fisherfolk families not being able to benefit from the scheme. Instead, they had to cope with iincreased competition for the same fishing grounds, resulting in a lower catch for the non-mechanized craft. some programmes can be extremely beneficial, but not necessary for the target group for which the programme is intended. Extension planners and FEAs should, at the very outset, be aware of the effects such extension programmes might bring about, not only for the target group, but also for non-targeted groups.

Working with social groups and power structures

We have already discussed the divisions that are made in different target groups for an extension programme. *FOR EXAMPLE, one target group may comprise of skippers of 3t boats and another target group may comprise of small-scale fish processors. Overlap, however, between different target groups can occur; a fisherman could be the owner of a 3t boat and also be engaged in small-scale fish processing.*

Apart from the practical division in target groups (for the purpose of the programme), adults can also be divided into groups according to **social characteristics**. Age may be one characteristic, but there are many more, Such as, *FOR EXAMPLE, gender, ethnic group, religion, caste, political affiliation and economic status.* The importance of certain social characteristics is that they make the concerned people feel that they belong to a certain social group.

People can, however, belong to various social groups, but with different levels of affiliation. The type of social groups prevalent in one area can also be different from the type of social groups in another area. Often social groups become important when there are differences in certain social characteristics, such as, *FOR EXAMPLE, religious or political affiliations.*

In general, groups of adults with different social characteristics often have different interests and experiences. *FOR EXAMPLE, younger people often have a higher education standard and are quick to learn new subjects. Older people, on the other hand, often have a wealth of experience to offer.* The FEA has to cater to these different abilities

and experiences and will, if necessary, have to adjust the way extension is provided (or the way the extension message is presented) and adapt the extension message accordingly.

In some cases, it is possible to mix different social groups. This should be encouraged, because a variety of views on a certain situation or problem often gives a deeper understanding of it and can be a better basis for finding the appropriate solution. But such mixing is feasible only so long as the interests and experiences of the different social groups, belonging to the same target group of a particular extension programme, do not conflict. In many cases, however, it is just not culturally viable to mix certain groups.

Cultural values are different from one community to another. What is customary in one place can be the opposite in another. In some communities it is normal for men and women to attend the same meetings and for the women to be allowed to express their views. In other communities, women attend separate meetings, and even then only with the consent of their husbands or male relatives. Similar distinctions can occur with other social characteristics. The FEA has to be sensitive to these customs and values in his or her area and make the appropriate adjustments to the extension activities so as to effectively reach as many segments of the target group as possible.

It would be seen from the above that, in the first place, the FEA will have to ascertain whether the target group consists of different social groups. If it does, the question arises whether the different social groups require different extension activities, because of

- **Their different interests.** (This affects the content of the extension message. *FOR EXAMPLE, an extension programme may have the objective of improving operation and maintenance skills among owners of outboard engines and the target group comprises of both young and older owners of outboard engines. The younger people might be more interested in learning in detail, whereas the older people might be happier with acquiring a general knowledge about operation and maintenance of the engines.*)

- **Their different learning capabilities.** (This affects the extension method. *FOR EXAMPLE*, in some areas women are *less educated than* men. *Therefore, extension programmes for women in those areas may have to include simpler audio-visual aids, using more illustrations, than would be necessary if the target group consisted entirely of men.*)
- **Their different income-generating or household activities.** (This affects the timing of the extension activities. *FOR EXAMPLE*, *as each type* of fishing gear has *its own requirements with respect* to the timing of the fishing operation, fishermen *using different gear are at sea at different times.*)
- **Their different cultural values that do not allow certain social groups to mix.** This may require the organization of separate extension activities.

Not only does the existence of different social groups often influence the extension message and the extension methodology, it also often has an impact on the success of the extension programme. Many of the fisheries extension programmes aim to improve the economic situation of their clients, often within the context of better fish resources management. If members of one social group succeed in improving their economic conditions, this may not be acceptable to members of other social groups or it may cause friction within the social group itself.

Changes in the economic conditions of clients are never viewed neutrally, particularly with respect to the power base of the clients and the changes in the economic conditions of their fellow community members. This is because fishing is, generally, a team, or community, effort. Clients or non-clients who feel that their power base is weakened by changes will resist them. In some cases, the disadvantages that go with this resistance outweigh the advantages of the extension programme. Two EXAMPLES are cited here to illustrate this principle.

ONE: If fishermen themselves learn more about operation, maintenance and even repair of their engines, they need less services from the

village mechanic or f/k' local **spart'** parts th'aler. And if **they** need **their** assistance, **they** are in a better position to negotiate better services. Hence, the mechanics and spare parts dealers may not like the new skills and knowledge acquired by time fishermen and may not offer satisfactory service to these fishermen.

TWO: *An extension programme, with the objective of lie/ping fisherwomen acquire skills in improved methods of lagoon fishing, may significantly contribute to an increased income for **their families**. But with their better and more **reliable** earnings, the position of flit' women in their households **changes**. Often the women become more independent, because they are no **longer financially** dependent **entirely on their husbands** or on other members of t/it' family, and because other family members are proud of **their** achievement. In some communities, flit' women may be allowed to decide for themselves on how to spend their earnings, but in others an increased independent status may be resented by flit' males and could result in ill—treatment of the women in the house/mold. In yet another community, the earnings generated by flit' woman may have to be handed over to f/ic husband, who now feels that due to f/us income lie can work less, the workload of flut' woman thereby increasing without an improvement in the house/uold income.*

*It could also happen that certain people who are relatively powerful may use the economic opportunities triggered by the extension programme to benefit at the expense of others. This can be illustrated by the following **EXAMPLE**, typical of India and Shri Lanka:*

A group of t'n women participate in a field extension course on improved methods of making dried fish. The ten women know each other well, being from the same neighbour/hood, and are thus from flit' same social group on this count. But when it comes to economic status, all the women, except two, are wives of crew mt'mbers who do not own a boat or an t'ngine, though some do own fishing nets. These women work at making coir rope to supplement the household income. The two exceptions come from boat—owning families and f/icy also own a number of coir pits. Many of the other women work in these coir pits.

When the participants successfully complete the course, one of the coir pit owners decides to start a business in dried fish—making. Using her own resources she has a number of drying racks constructed and several smoking kilns made. She then tells four of the women who had followed the course and who work in her coir pits that she would like them to work in her dried fish enterprise. The women would receive payment based on the quantity and quality of dried fish produced. The four indicate that they are not very attracted by the idea. They tell her that they are already busy making coir rope and would not be able to do any other work in addition to their household duties. In reality, they feel that the wage offered is too low and that they could make more money by making coir rope. They also hope to make dried fish themselves, even though on a much smaller scale.

The entrepreneur, however, does not want to give up her idea nor does she want to hire women from outside the neighbourhood to whom she would have to pay a much higher wage. She, therefore, tells the women that they could choose, either to accept her offer or not work even in her coir pits. The women choose the first option, as they know it would be very difficult to find other coir pits in their neighbourhood.

In practice, this type of exploitation is usually not as blatant as cited in the example. But power structures do exist at village level and the more powerful tend to use these structures for their own benefit. The FEA, on the other hand, has to try to avoid these situations and suggest options that suit both poorer and richer participants. The best method is to discuss the possible options, with those assessed as being powerful and with the others, during the extension activity itself. The more clients are willing to discuss during the extension activities, the opportunities and problems they may encounter when they improve their situations, the more likely the problems can be anticipated and the FEA can help with solutions.

Establishing a demand for fisheries extension

As we have seen, the FEA is involved in the two sides of fisheries extension: the demand side and the supply side. On the demand side, the FEA assists the clients in analyzing their problems, assessing their needs and, if necessary, helping to organize for them extension methods, such as a field workshop. On the supply side, the FEA is responsible for providing the required extension services to the clients, such as arranging for technical information.

DEMAND SIDE

- Individual clients
- Client groups
- Village level organizations

SUPPLY SIDE

- Fisheries Extension Agency
- Fisheries Extension Service

Resources

- skills
 - experiences
 - other resources
- problems
- needs

Interaction

- problem analysis
- needs assessment
- extension needs
- organization of extension activities

Resources

- technical skills
- communication skills
- experience
- other resources



Demand and supply of fisheries extension at the field level

We have also seen that while the development of a sound demand side is crucial, this may take of lot of the time of the FEA. However, for an efficient extension service, it would be more advantageous if the FEA could concentrate on the supply side, rather than having to put time into the community work required for an effective demand for extension, at the cost of the supply side. Fisheries and fisheries-related technical subjects are numerous and developments in each can be fast. The FEA needs time to absorb information about these developments. The FEA may also have other duties to attend to, such as the enforcement of legislation.

It would, therefore, be ideal if an effective demand for fisheries extension could be established by the village-level and island-level societies themselves, provided they have the broad support of their membership. These societies should inform the potential clients and target groups about the fisheries extension service and about what it can and cannot offer. And as many persons as possible should be informed, to avoid the extension service concentrating on an inside group only. The FEA is responsible for spreading the required information.

The role of village-level fisheries societies in establishing a demand for fisheries extension

Village-level fisheries societies, such as fisheries cooperatives, are the most obvious organizations capable of establishing a demand for fisheries extension at the village-level. Most countries in the region have a long history of village-level fisheries societies that have been initiated by their fisheries agencies. Different governments, have from time to time, introduced different aims for these societies, but nearly always they have been to facilitate the supply of government facilities to the communities.

An advantage of the fisheries society is that, because of its links with the government, the FEA can easily establish contacts with a potential target group. However, there are three important aspects

that should be considered when working with the members of a fisheries society. They are:

- How representative are the members of the fisheries society when compared to the fishing village as a whole;
- How representative of its membership are the executive members of the fisheries society; and
- Whether decision-making within the society is pursued in such a way that all members are adequately involved in the process and have equal access to the benefits offered through the society.

These three aspects will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Membership to village-level societies is usually restricted in one way or the other, either through formal restrictions or specific requirements and sometimes even informally. Restrictions can, for instance, be based on limiting membership to a set number. *FOR EXAMPLE, the society may have adopted a rule that sets the maximum number of members at 50.* There can also be all sorts of requirements that a person aspiring to be a member would have to fulfil, *SUCH AS, buying a share, being proposed by one or more members or having shown good behaviour during a certain probation period.*

Apart from **such** formal restrictions and requirements, which are often laid down in the society's constitution, there could be all sorts of informal restrictions and requirements. Some societies may wish to have members from a certain neighbourhood in the village only, and some societies may informally require that its members support a certain political party. Some societies favour members from both sexes, whereas other societies may be only of men or women.

The FEA should be aware of the type of membership of the fisheries society in his or her area. Fisheries extension services are, in principle, public services, and, therefore, the most needed and most committed beneficiaries should be selected from the broadest spectrum of fisherfolk in the fishing village. If the FEA feels that such a broad section is indeed represented in the fisheries society,

there is good reason to contact a potential target group through the society.

However, in some cases, the membership of a society can be restricted in such a way that it is parallel to the target group of a certain extension programme. FOR EXAMPLE, the national fisheries extension service may have planned a programme to promote better maintenance of inboard engines. if a society appears to comprise mainly of members who are skippers of 3t boats, this may constitute a sound target group for the planned programme. But if the programme intends to introduce trammelnets on traditional craft, such as the outrigger canoe, the members of this society would not be a suitable target group at all. In such a case, the FEA may have to find his target group from among other fishermen who are not necessarily members of the society, if at all there are any in the fishing village.

The second aspect concerns the executive members of the society. They are important for the FEA because he or she will normally have to reach the target group through these members. If the FEA feels that the target group is well represented in the society, how far it will become effectively involved in the extension programme will often depend on the executive members of the society. In other words, the specific target group's involvement with the project would depend on how well, it feels, it is represented by the executive members.

Here we come to a very specific feature of a fisheries society. In practice, the executive members of a fisheries society are not always full-time fishermen but are often traders or even government servants. In fact, fishermen themselves are not always the most active members in a fisheries society. Polinac (1988) has analyzed a number of reasons why fishermen find it difficult to participate actively in a fisheries society, and the following reasons may be relevant for the BOB region:

- Fishermen are sometimes not present in their fishing village during certain periods of the year, because of migration during off seasons, either to other fishing grounds or to inland areas to participate in agriculture or inland fisheries;

- Fishermen work irregular hours, which can make it difficult for them to participate in scheduled meetings;
- Fishermen are independent natured, which is enhanced by the secrecy of fishing grounds. Therefore, there is a certain reluctance to discuss fishing matters; and
- Fishing what is mainly a common property resource works on a first-come, first-serve basis, and this may inhibit cooperation.

Pollnac (ibid) has also noticed that in many countries women play a prominent and complex role in fisheries and fisheries-related activities. Therefore, the success of the fisheries society may often depend on the role fisherwomen have in it. Women often have a greater sense of responsibility with regard to financial matters. They are also more often at home, in contrast to their husbands or other male family members, who have irregular working hours and who might seasonally migrate to other fishing areas.

It is not necessarily a bad thing that fishermen and/or fisherwomen are not represented by fisherfolk in the fisheries society, especially if they feel that their interests are well represented. But it could happen that the executive members begin using the society for their own interests rather than for the interests of its beach-level membership. We have earlier spoken of power structures in villages; some people effectively manage to use the society to strengthen their own power base.

The last aspect concerns the decision-making processes within the society. The society should be able to involve all members in society activities relevant to them, at least in the initial stages. Participation in extension activities should be open to all members and, in case a selection of participants is necessary, the members should consent to the selection procedures. Often it is easier and faster to call, persons from the neighbourhood rather than calling for a members meeting, but openness to all members is essential if the FEA wishes to work seriously with the society.