

COST AND EARNINGS OF TRAWLERS OPERATING OFF RATNAGIRI COAST, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Variations in the cost and earnings of trawlers operated during the period of August 03 to May 04 off Ratnagiri coast are studied. Vessel and engine specifications data was collected from 50 trawlers and were classified into two clusters on the basis of specifications of vessel and engine. Total capital cost of cluster I trawlers was more at Rs. 11,26,845/- than for cluster II trawlers at Rs. 5,28,217/-. The fixed cost and variable cost of one fishing season were Rs. 3,90,108/- and Rs. 12,55,571/- for the trawlers of cluster I, respectively while the respective values were Rs. 2,31,304/- and Rs. 9,47,093/- for cluster II trawlers. The predominant item of cost was fuel. Diesel was the major constituent with a share of 67.20 and 63.35 per cent, respectively in the variable cost of trawlers of cluster I and cluster II. Important indicators of economic efficiency were also estimated and discussed. Capital turn over ratio for trawler of cluster I and cluster II were 1.77 and 2.84, respectively whereas respective values were 30.61 and 39.78 for Rate of return to loan amount, 2.28 and 1.31 for pay back period in years for both clusters. The earnings were influenced by fish landing as well as fish prices prevailing in different seasons.

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Introduction of mechanized fishing vessel has been accorded major priority for the development of marine fishery sector in the maritime districts of Maharashtra. Mechanisation led to intensification of fishing and also paved the way for the growth of sea food industry. The present study deals with the economics of trawler of different size operating from Mirkarwada fishing harbour of Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. Ratnagiri is one of the major trawling centre in Maharashtra. Trawlers operating along Ratnagiri coast have capacity to operate upto a depth zone of 50 m. It is a known concept that marine aquatic resources available in this depth zone are limited. When number of trawlers operating in this region were less, the catch what they were getting was more per unit of effort employed. With increase in the number of trawlers which are presently operating on same amount of available resources, the catch per unit efforts are decreasing day by day. This declines the economic returns achieved by the trawler operators. Considering this, it was felt necessary to undertake the study to assess the productivity of trawl fishing units, which will be helpful to formulate policies for fisheries development. The study would also shed some light on the economic efficiency of mechanised fishing units. The economic analysis of trawl operations would help the financial institutions to take a decision on providing credit to fishermen. Hence this study is an attempt to generate the required database in this regard.

Economic feasibility of any business plays major role in its survival. Catches per unit efforts are decreasing all over world. Researchers are working on this aspect to know the reasons, since the inception of trawling in India. The research outcomes of some of the reports about the economics of the trawling operations along the Indian coast are discussed. Cost and earnings of trawlers operated along the Indian coast was studied by Sathiadhas and Panikkar (1989), Sathiadhas *et al.* (1992), Senthilathiban *et al.* (1996), Senthilathiban *et al.*, (1997) and Sehara and Kanakkan (1993). Whereas economic feasibility of trawling operation have been worked out by Sehara *et al.* (1991) and Senthilathiban *et al.* (1999). Sehara *et al.* (1991) have studied the economics i.e. cost and earning of trawlers of sizes 12 to 14 m without forming the groups. The trawler size and specification of engine decide the depth of fishing operation. These factors play an important role in economic feasibility of trawler operation. Thus in the present study an attempt was made to study economics as well as cost and earnings of two clusters of trawlers according to trawler size and engine specifications.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Maharashtra is the maritime state situated on West Coast of India and Ratnagiri is located in the South Konkan region of Maharashtra. Most of the trawlers operating along Ratnagiri coast land their catches at Mirkarwada fishing harbour. It is situated two kilometer away from the Ratnagiri town (17°00'North latitude and 73°16'42"