

A. Purpose

While the problem of fishermen's general levels of income receives much interests and attention by the Federal Government, very little is known about the ways by which the income itself is shared in various cooperative undertakings.

A concise description of the Trengganu Fishing Industry¹ is given to serve as background to the understanding of the sharing system.

B. Scope

A general survey of most fishing villages in the State was made from 27th June to 10th July 1957. Informations regarding fishing methods, nature of work and functions of various members in every kind of fishing units, and several principles of income distribution, were all recorded.

Four areas, namely Tanjong Telok, Sebrang Takir, Sebrang Buaya and Kuala Kemaman (see Appendix I) were selected for study by the writer. The first two places which had a fisherman population of 450 and 800 respectively are situated in Kuala Trengganu Area where the writer himself was born, brought up and educated most of his time. The period spent in these two villages for this Academic Exercise, was from 12th July to 20th August, 1957. The rest of the time, until early September, the writer stayed at Sebrang Buaya, 40 miles away ~~among~~ and at Kuala Kemaman, 100 miles from the State Capital. These two villages are included in Kemaman Area and had a population of 250 and 800 fishermen respectively.

1. marine fisheries.

Due to the lack of time, the writer could not include in his detailed study any fishing village within Besut Area. But from the previous general survey, he finds that except for details, the distributive principles practised at Besut Area, are not much different from those found in the other two areas.

C. Method

121 leaders of various fishing methods that are known in the four villages were interviewed. A questionnaire had been prepared and was completed in the field (see Appendix II). 5 of each method were then selected for detailed study as regards their system of income distribution (see Appendix III). Out of them, the incomes of 12 fishing units representing 4 major methods (Pukat Payang and Pukat Terek at Kuala Trengganu; and Pukat Tangkol Ikan and line-fishing at Sebrang Buaya) were recorded by the writer on every fishing day during the period covered in each village.

On six occasions the writer joined some of the units to sea as ordinary crew member and on ten occasions, he observed the distribution of catches and earnings.

D. Geographic Setting

The Persekutuan Tanah Melayu with an area of approximately 51,000 square miles and a coastline extending for about 1,000 miles, is surrounded by shallow seas. The ten fathom line runs between 6 - 10 miles offshore from the north to as far south as Kuala Trengganu. After which the shelving is steeper and the line lies only between $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles out.¹

The East Coast is exposed to full blast of Northwest monsoon from November to March bringing strong winds, heavy rains and violent sea to the region. This is followed by a period of calm and normally regular winds.²

Until recently with the introduction of mechanization, the fishermen sailed to fishing grounds well before dawn with the help of land breeze which lasts about 8 a.m. and sailed home with sea breeze which starts at about noon.

B. Economic Effects of the Monsoon.

At the height of the season, land and sea contacts between Trengganu and other states are cut off altogether for days. Most of the fishing methods are out of operation during the period, and the export of dried and salted fish is temporarily suspended.

The Monsoon means almost a total loss of a major source of income among the fishermen and those dependent upon the industry. This lack of income leads to indebtedness among the fishermen.

The violent seas during the season also make the use of various types of fishing stakes found in the west coast such as Ambai³, Jermal and Blat⁴ impracticable.

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2. Namely: (i) The Doldrums - from April to May.
(ii) South West Monsoon - from June - September.
(iii) The Doldrums - from October - November.

3. Fixed stake using a fine meshed seine about 30 feet long.

4. Various kinds of fish traps working in 3 fathoms of water or thereabouts at high tide.