

PRAWN (PENAEUS MONODON) SEED EXPLOITED ALONG THE COAST OF VISAKHAPATNAM AND VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICTS OF EAST COAST OF ANDHRA PRADESH*

The prawn business proved the best among all the businesses because of its profit earned on investment and high value in export trade. The demand for prawns is increasing day by day. Many prawn and aquaculture farms have come up in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram districts of Andhra Pradesh. Many agricultural and unutilised coastal lands have been converted into prawn farms. Because of this reason demand for prawn seed has been increasing tremendously.

In Andhra Pradesh there is only one hatchery at Visakhapatnam in public sector operated by TASPARC and there are four or five hatcheries in private sector. They are not in a position to supply prawn seed to all the prawn farmers in time because of heavy demand. To meet the demand the fishermen folk started exploitation of prawn seed from the surf zone. It started at Narsapuram and Rambilli fishing villages of Visakhapatnam District and Tippavalasa and Thotapallimukkam fishing villages of Vizianagaram districts in July

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1994. However, by September 1994 the capture of prawn seed from surf zone expanded rapidly to the coastal belt of almost all the fishing villages of Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram districts.

The net used is fixed bagnet of 2.5 m length and 0.5 m width which is made of nylon mesh cloth (mosquito netting). The cost of the net is about Rs. 250-300. Two persons are required to operate the net effectively. A net can be operated 20 times in a day. Duration of each haul is about 30 minutes. The seed collected in each haul is transferred into a plastic tub filled with sea water.

The seed is sold to the middle-man at the shore.

The price of the seed in July 1994 was Rs. 30/- for 100 numbers and it increased to Rs. 60/- by September 1994 due to heavy demand.

Collection of prawn seed has become a newly established endeavour of the fisherfolk particularly the aged, who have given up fishing and its idle. They have now enthusiastically entered this least risky, more profitable business of seed collection.