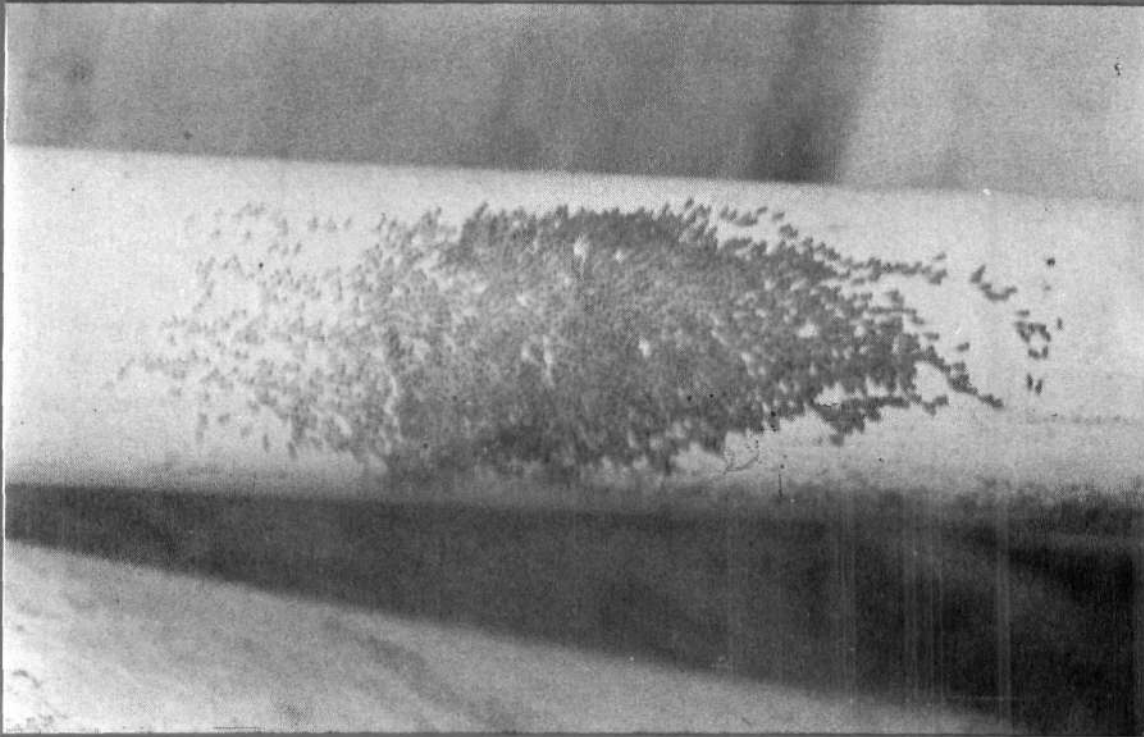




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910 PRACTICE OF HOOKS AND LINE FISHERY OFF SATPATHI WATERS, MAHARASHTRA

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The crew employed on trawl units operating from Old Light House fish landing centre of Veraval belong to different states, mostly Southerners from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. They are locally called "Mappillai". Following the fishing patterns in the South, they initiated the practice of integrating trawling with hooks and line fishing on a trial basis off Satpathi waters (Bombay) in 1996.

The trawler boats leaving Veraval Harbour, along with trawlers from south Gujarat, sail for 16-18 hrs towards the southeast to reach the Satpathi grounds. In December 1996 some of the Tamil fishermen manually operated hooks and line using cephalopods, ribbon fishes, mackerel and other fishes caught in the trawl nets as baits and the results were encouraging. By early January 1997 nearly 100 boats had adopted the practice. Initially taken up as a means to augment income generated from the trawlers and to pass the spare time onboard, this method was found to be quite profitable and by October 1997, around 450-500 units took up this operation. Trawl nets and hooks and line were employed alternatively and the operation reached a peak in the period from October to January and in the "Mahashivarathri" season.

The hooks used are of varying sizes, usually of 130-150 mm and 50 mm in length.

Longlines with bundles of 5-8 hooks at regular intervals, are hung at a depth of 5-10 fathoms (10-20m) from the float line. On an average, each boat carries 2-3 boxes of hooks (100 hooks per box) along with the lines and the floats. Often in productive waters ('Ghata pani'), the catches on hooks are very poor and hence this fishing method finds more application in less productive waters ('Acha pani').

During the initial trial (December 1996 and January 1997) the average catch per boat was 1,000 to 1,200 kg. The catches predominantly comprise the highly valued *Scomberomorus commersoni* (80 % of the catch), lethrinids, *Lutjanus* spp., polynemids, *Arius* spp., *Scoliodon* spp., *Protonibea diacanthus* and *S. guttatus* (all in lesser numbers). Average catch per boat for the following season (October 1997-January 1998) varied from 200 to 1,000 kg and mainly comprised *S.commersoni*, *Thunnus tonggol* and *Euthynnus affinis* along with a few numbers of *Epinephelus* spp., *Rachycentron canadus* and *P. diacanthus*.

It is observed that the Gujarathi fishermen are not as skilled in this integrated method of fishing as their southern counterparts.

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