

A STUDY OF THE MANPOWER SKILLS OF FISHERY WORKERS IN THE
COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INDUSTRY CONSIDERED IMPORTANT
BY RESPONDENTS IN WESTERN VISAYAS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Economists have long been aware of the importance of human resource development. Smith, for example, stressed the importance of education at various points in the Wealth of Nations. He specifically included "the acquired and useful abilities of all the inhabitants or members of society" in his concept of "fixed capital."

The acquisition of such talents, by the maintenance of the acquirer during his education, study, or apprenticeship, always costs a real expense, which is fixed and realized, as it were, in his person. Those talents, as they make a part of his fortune, so do they likewise of that of the society to which he belongs.¹

Marshall emphasized the importance of education "as a national investment." In his view, "the most valuable of all capital is that which is invested in human beings."²

Former Senator Emmanuel Pelaez, citing the proceedings of the International Conference on Middle

¹Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (New York: Random House, Inc., 1937), pp. 265-266, as cited by Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Myers, Education, Manpower and Economic Growth: Strategies for Human Resource Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), p. 3.

²Alfred Marshall, Principles of Economics (London: MacMillan and Co., 1930), pp. 216-564, as cited by Harbison and Myers, ibid.

Manpower held under the auspices of the United States Peace Corps in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in October, 1962, said:

. . . less than half of the development of the average industrialized country is attributable to capital investment . . . and more than one-half (of such development) is the result of increasing skills and development of technology to be applied by trained manpower.³

In a developing nation, to obtain the optimum functional participation of every citizen in building the country's future and to produce scientific and technological manpower become urgent.

One of the salient features of Presidential Decree 6-A/provision which states, among others:

To train the nation's manpower in the middle level skills for national development.

To develop the high-level professions that will provide leadership for improving the quality of human life.⁴

Thus, since the proclamation of Martial Law on September 21, 1972, the national goal has been accelerated development. Specifically, the development goals have been spelled out in Fiscal Year 1972-1975 Development Plan,

³ Emmanuel Pelaez, "Trained Manpower and National Development," Science Review, 13:(3)4, May-June, 1972.

⁴ Philippines (Republic), Presidential Decree 6-A, Section 3, par. b and c; Authorizing the Undertaking of Educational Development Projects, Providing for the Mechanics of Implementation and Financing Thereof, and for other purposes.

the objectives of which are the increasing the rate of economic growth, maximizing income per capita, realizing a more equitable income distribution, generating employment, and promoting regional development.⁵

The problem areas crucial to development are people and food. More crucial than these is the wide gap between rapid population growth and the quality and quantity of food the country could supply. This is further aggravated by the increasingly alarming problem of how to provide job opportunities for an ever-increasing younger group of the populace.⁶

In the Philippines, the complex problem of food and employment, coupled with the rising expectation of higher per capita income, has posed a formidable challenge to its fisheries resources. An archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, it has a coastline of 17,640 kilometers which is as long as that of the United States, fringed by many

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Jose M. Lawas, "Economic Development Programs in the New Society," Science Review, 14:(2)3, March-April, 1973, p. 3.

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Rodolfo C. Nayga, "Research Programs in Agricultural Education," PCAAR First National Research Division-Workshop, No. 18, Applied Rural Sociology Research Papers (Los Baños: University of the Philippines, February 12-17, 1973), p. 11.

navigable bays and gulfs.⁷

Of the marine resources of the country which consist of its territorial inland waters covering an area of 167, 536, 130 square kilometers and which is about six times the country's total land area, only the coastal and inshore waters are being used, leaving the territorial open seas and adjacent international waters⁸ practically unexploited by Filipino fishermen.⁹

The fishing industry has an important impact on the Philippine economy, the primary sector alone contributing about 4 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP). Its most valuable role is as provider of food. Per output fish consumption at 29 kg. is more than twice the world's average. Fishing is also an important source of employment, much of it being self-employment. The total number

⁷Inocencio R. Ronquillo, "A Review of the Round Scad Fishery in the Philippines," Philippine Journal of Fisheries, 2:(1-2)87, January-December, 1973.

⁸The South China Sea, especially the Southern and Western Parts, Includes Some of the Widest Expanses of Shallow Shelf in the World. The total sea area involves nearly five million square kilometers. From the South China Sea Fisheries: A Proposal For Accelerated Development (Rome: Food Agricultural Organization, United Nations, UNDP, May, 1974), p. 6.

⁹Philippines (Republic). Bureau of National and Foreign Information, The Economy of the Philippines, Fishing Industry, BNFI Briefings (Manila: January, 1975), pp. 15-16.

of Filipinos employed in Fisheries is 5 per cent of the total active population. This is the highest in the South China Sea Region.¹⁰

Although this is a known and accepted fact, our fishery industry has received only half-hearted support. Consequently, we are far from being self-sufficient in our fish supply, as evidenced by the fact that the Philippines imported P143 million worth of fish and fish products for the Fiscal Year 1972.¹¹

The admittedly slow progress of our fisheries industries is due to the glaring lack of trained manpower qualified to raise and sustain our products and consumption of fish and fish products.¹²

The need for this type of skilled manpower is aptly illustrated by Director Felix R. Gonzales of the Bureau of

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South China Sea Fisheries: A Proposal for Accelerated Development, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

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Philippines (Republic) Bureau of National and Foreign Information: The Economy of the Philippines, Fishing Industry, op. cit.

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Isidro Francisco, "Fishery Education in the Philippines," in the Philippine Fisheries Yearbook (Quezon City: Bureau of Fisheries, 1963), p. 95 as cited in Isidro Francisco, "Present Scope of Fisheries Education in the Philippines," Fisheries Gazette, 4:(4) 2-6, January, 1960.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, thus:

In an age of motor speed and electronic wizardry, the fishermen no longer depends upon the weather to bring a remunerative catch. The tools with which to implement the various stages of fishery development can be produced in a relatively short time, but the training of men to hand these tools usually takes much longer.

The importance of fishery training cannot be over-emphasized because the best-designed equipment has little value in the hands of a man who lacks ability and skill.¹³

Off-shore fisheries development is hamstrung by the dearth of skilled manpower and out-dated equipment.¹⁴ Hence, continued fish production to meet the demand of an increasing population causes a tremendous pressure on our already declining traditional fishing grounds. A similar observation has been made by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in the 1975 Philippine Yearbook.¹⁵

A review of the performance of the fisheries industry in the past ten years by the Task Force on Human Settlement

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Felix R. Gonzales, "Education and Training Requirements for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Conservation," Science Review, 16:(4)24-25, July-August, 1975.

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Pablo T. Tamesis, "Fishermen's Training for Manpower Development," The Philippine Craftsman, 9:(4)11, October, 1967.

¹⁵

Philippines (Republic) National Census and Statistics Office, The 1975 Philippine Yearbook (Manila: National Economic Development Authority, 1976), p. 571.

of the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) revealed that during the past ten years the country's fish catch was short by an average of 42.127 metric tons or 5.76 per cent of the demand¹⁶ and 338.711 metric tons or 29.6 per cent of the requirements.¹⁷ Deficiencies were covered by importations which averaged 62,380 metric tons annually during the decade under consideration.

However, despite a history of deficiency with respect to demand, deficiency stood at 43,672 metric tons (3.75 per cent); deficiency in relation to the recommended requirements was 313,663 metric tons (21.8 per cent), while imports stood at 64,202 metric tons. Taking into account exports of 10,747 metric tons and the composition of fish imports, the per capita consumption for the year was computed at 29.65 kilograms. This falls short of per capita allowance by nearly one-fifth (18.18 per cent) of the 36.5 kilograms per capita allowance recommended to Filipinos

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Effective demand here refers to the amount of fish bought for human consumption and excludes demand for fish meal.

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Nutritional requirements here means that the recommended allowance as defined by the Food and Nutrition Center in 1969, based on the minimum per capita allowance of 36.5 kilograms as defined in Fishery Statistics, 1975 (Manila: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.)

by the Food and Nutritional Research Center in 1969.¹⁸

In the same study, the Task Force has projected that the Filipinos will be consuming less and less fish than their recommended allowance up to 1986. This is the year when effective demand, e. g., the amount of fish people are able to buy, hence, consume, shall have qualified the recommended allowance. Beyond 1986, consumption shall have exceeded the requirements, that is, people shall have the capacity to buy fish products in excess of 36.5 kilograms per head.¹⁹

This study on the manpower skill requirements in marine fisheries in the Western Visayas is significant because the projections indicate that the region will be the first to realize the per capita allowance of 36.5 kilograms is Region VI or the Western Visayas which was projected to reach this level in 1978. The projection indicates that from 1979 to 2000, the Western Visayas will be producing surplus of fish for other regions of the country.²⁰

¹⁸Philippines (Republic) Agricultural and Natural Resources Development in the Philippines for the Year 2000. Technical Report: Part III, Fishing (Quezon City: Development Academy of the Philippines, March, 1975), p. 3.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 11-12.

²⁰Ibid., p. 13.

It is needless to say that the future of the fishing industry will be jeopardized without the technicians and skilled workers needed to efficiently harvest and utilize the available resources. Not too many realize the contribution of the fishing industry to the nation's food supply. But fewer still realize the tie-up between the growth of the fishing industry and fishery education. We need deep sea fishermen to hike the landed catch and bring about a protein balance in our national diet.²¹

Fishery development requires not only oceanic vessels and modern canneries but also masterfishermen, gear technicians, fishery technicians, marine engineers, oceanographers, and others. As the demand for specific types of manpower by our developing industry grows, fishery training programs should be dovetailed to job requirements.

From our fishery schools, we expect to get those fishery technicians and skilled workers who will perform specialized work in the fishing industry. Our fishery schools should upgrade and retrain people in the industry, prepare the youth for challenging careers and remunerative

²¹Pablo T. Tamesis, "Fishery Education in our Democracy," The Philippine Journal of Education, 47:(4) 236-237, October, 1968.

jobs in fishery, train our manpower to its maximum potential, and create a new image for the industry that will be in accord with the rising expectations of our people in the New Society.²²

According to de Vera,²³ fishery education²⁴ has tremendous responsibilities and a mission to accomplish in line with manpower training which is an adjunct to the overall socio-economic development of the country.

I. THE PROBLEM

a. Statement of the problem. The main purpose of this study was to ascertain what skills of fishery workers in marine fisheries are considered important by persons directly involved in the fisheries industry. Specifically, this study attempted to:

1. identify the different skills of fishery workers in commercial fisheries considered important by employers/operators of commercial fishing boats, marine fisheries teachers/instructors and BFAR

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Gonzales, ibid., p. 27.

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Antonio de Vera, "Fishery Education and Manpower Training," The Philippine Craftsman, 9:(10)3, April, 1968.

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For the brief history of fishery education in the Philippines, see Appendix D.

marine fisheries technicians/technologists in the Western Visayas;

2. determine the extent of agreement on the importance of the skills of the manpower categories among the three groups of respondents;

3. determine the variations in the ranks of the skills, based on their importance scores, when the data were analyzed.

3.1 by province from where the respondents came;

3.2 by position/designation of the respondents;

3.3 by size of the boats being expected by the respondents.

In addition to the foregoing purposes, the study, on the basis of the findings, attempted to provide information which can be used to reduce discrepancies between the skills needed by employers and those which students acquire in fishery education.

b. Need for the study. This study is needed for the following reasons:

1. Fisheries development as a process include the training of fishery workers who are needed in the different areas of fisheries activities;

2. It is the concern of fishery schools to train the manpower needs of the fishery industry;

3. The fisheries education curriculum must be closely related to the manpower requirements of the fishery industry;

4. Skills which are considered as important by persons directly involved in the fisheries industry must be taught in fisheries schools.