mechanised sector.\textsuperscript{309} The technological interventions initiated in early 80’s imparted dramatic changes in the fish production scenario of the state.

As a result of the mechanisation and motorisation process, the non-motorised sector is presently a marginalised group. Similar to the artisanal sector prior to motorisation now non-motorised fishermen who have the least access to the welfare schemes of the government and other agencies, have stratified into the most economically backward state of the community.

In an attempt to overcome their growing marginalisation the catamaran fishermen have in many places adopted/innovated new fishing methods like fishing with Artificial Fish Habits by constructing them in the vicinity of their villages.

\textbf{CHAPTER III}

\textbf{ROLE OF FISHERMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES}

Fishing, one of the oldest and primitive professions in the world, constitutes an important factor not only for the development of the economy of a nation, but also for the fishing communities. It is an income deriving factor, which suffered a lot, during the past years due to the negligence of the government as well as the fishing community. Since the introduction of science and technology into the fishing sector, it grew slowly and steadily. But the fishermen’s condition was not upto the level in financial matters.
Their illiteracy and ignorance paved the way for their economic downtroddenness. In order to enhance their economic condition the government introduced a series of measures for their upliftment. Among them the prime and chief one was the introduction of Co-operative Societies for the welfare of the fishermen community and the development of the fishing industry.  

In short, Co-operative Movement was started in India towards the closed of the 19th century, when the agriculturists made some attempt to start Co-operative Societies for their agricultural development. They appealed to the government to introduce Co-operative Societies for their welfare. Hence they were started in agriculture and its allied sectors. On that line the Fishermen Co-operative Society was started in 1924.

The fishermen who were the primary producers were closely tied to dealers not only by the normal trading relationship but also by heavy habitual indebtedness. In view of the obvious need to reform such a monopolistic set up the Fishermen Co-operative Societies were organised in many places in the state. In order to promote the welfare of the fishermen, administrative management is highly essential. The Government of Tamil Nadu realised the importance of it and made appointments of officials, as the hierarchy of officials and Directors.

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312 G.O.Ms. No.790, Food and Agriculture Department, dated 28th February 1958, TNA.
The Fishery Co-operative Societies in Tamil Nadu are under the administrative control of Directorate of Fisheries. At the headquarters they were assisted by Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies. The Deputy Registrar is responsible for the promotion and supervision of the activities of the fishermen. The government sanctioned of a few Co-operative Inspectors to work under Regional Assistant Directors for the organisation of societies and a Co-operative Sub-Registrar for the head office to co-ordinate their work.\textsuperscript{313}

In 1904 the Government of India established Indian Co-operative Societies for the improvement of the standard of life of people. It was modified and introduced Co-operative Societies. In the Montegu Chemsford Reform Act of 1919, one of the provisions was provided for the establishment of the Co-operative Societies in each and every State. In these circumstances the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department established the Tamil Nadu Fishermen Co-operative Society in 1924.\textsuperscript{314}

**Objectives of Fisheries Co-operative Societies**

The co-operative societies played a vital role in the development of fishing industry, for relieving the fishermen from the clutches of the money lenders. The government organised Fishermen Co-operative Society for getting loans with small interest.\textsuperscript{315}

\textsuperscript{314} Interview with Thiru. G. John Doss, Clerk, Fishermen Co-operative Society, Mulloorthurai, on 27\textsuperscript{th} October 2006.
\textsuperscript{315} G.O.Ms. No.1215, Revenue Department, dated 4\textsuperscript{th} May 1909, TNA.
The fishermen are generally poor and most of them are indebted to money lenders, net owners, merchants and middlemen, either within or outside their community. Many fishermen are therefore, unable even to own a country craft or tackle not to speak to any modern equipment for fishing. Unless these people are released from the hold of money lenders and middlemen, provided with adequate finance to enable them to purchase modern fishing equipment and ensured transport facilities and cold-storage plants, it is possible and to improve their own economic condition and improve the industry. The establishment of the Fisheries Co-operative Societies with limited liability, in the Madras State on the model of the Rural Credit Co-operative Societies for agriculturists is aimed at improving the lot of fishermen.\textsuperscript{316}

The objectives of the Fisheries Co-operative Societies are, to raise funds for helping its members to acquire and own water courses, such as rivers and tanks by purchase or hire modern craft and tackles for increasing the catches by deep sea fishing, for purchase or hire vans for quick transportation. Thus by providing better marketing facilities and to procures and supply the established needs of the members they assist fishermen.\textsuperscript{317}

Those members of Fishermen Co-operative Society are below the age of sixty and above eighteen years. He must be an active marine fishermen and must not have any family member in regular employment of

\textsuperscript{317} \textit{Ibidp.14.}
government or private employer and must not own mechanised boat or beach landing craft.\textsuperscript{318}

Only fishermen, who are members of registered Fishermen Co-operative Societies are eligible for those loans in accordance with the special bye-laws of the societies.\textsuperscript{319} The few actual fishermen in these societies have paid their shares in installment during the fishing months and borrowed from the societies up to the limit of the subscribed share capital. When no fishing was done, for the purchase of boats and nets they had to borrow at ruinous rates of interest, from middlemen and money-lenders who during the fishing season are ready on the sea-shore to make their levy. The fish is sold by the fishermen at the price dictated by the creditor. The first effort to wean off the fishermen from this economic thralldom was made during the year 1924. Through the instrumentality of the Assistant Director (Coast) a resolution was passed at the conference held at Cannanore in December 1924, recommending that the District Co-operative Bank should advance loans to co-operative societies of actual fishermen of the security of their boats and nets. Though there was the risk of the boats getting suck and nets lost the conference felt that the risk was work taking. But the bank rejected the recommendation even though it claimed among its Directors two prominent member of the fishermen community.\textsuperscript{320} The fishermen often hardy to pay penal interest by reason of their being unaware of the due date

\textsuperscript{318} G.O.Ms. No.55, Animal Husbandary and Fisheries Department, dated 25\textsuperscript{th} February 1975, TNA.
\textsuperscript{319} Madras Information, Vol.XIX, No.8, August 1957, p.23.
\textsuperscript{320} Madras Information, Vol.VI, No.6, June 1952, p.14.
of payment and in consequence they themselves asked for the societies to wound up.\textsuperscript{321}

Co-operative Societies were successfully implemented for the grant of long term loans to fishermen. By supply of Pablo boats, nylon nets and quick transport vehicles, the government felt that the fishermen will improve their financial position and became self-dependent to be undertaken or through their catches either by themselves or through their Co-operative. The Government was glad to note that the Mettur Dams Fishermen Co-operative Marketing Society has taken advantage of government assistance in the shape of loan and free services two officers of the Co-operative Department and that it is doing good work in fishing and selling the catches of its members. It also observed that the societies like, Ennore, Vallambadu, Pulicat, Kanathur, Redikuppam, Mahabalipuram and Thanjavur, and the District Federations of Madras, Ramanathapuram and Kanyakumari have also commenced to undertake marketing operations. The government gave many relief measures to fishermen through this co-operative societies, to alleviate the distress among the fishermen caused by floods, famine and cyclones by supply of yarn and sail cloth, grant for repairing fishing boats and sale of catamarans at subsidised rates.\textsuperscript{322}

The fishing industry is a seasonal one and the yield change from time to time according to the nature of the climate. The failure of seasonal fishing caused them considerable hardship and the government look some


\textsuperscript{322} G.O.Ms.No.790, Food and Agriculture Department, dated 28\textsuperscript{th} February 1958, TNA.
alternative measures to save the people from starvation and agony. But, the fishermen borrow the money from the money-lenders at high rate of interest in the lean season. As they got loan from the Government the plight of the fishermen came to lowest level. Even though Saving-cum-Relief Schemes of marine fishermen is in vogue, the amount of Rs.1080/- is not enough to spend during the lean season. So at this critical situation, Government may come forward to help by providing food material, cloth and other essential commodities for their subsistence in the time of lean season through the Fishermen Co-operative Societies.\textsuperscript{323}

Credit is vital for fishing communities. Any development project that seeks to improve their standard of living has to address the question of credit. Artisanal fishing communities and petty fish traders in Tamil Nadu require credit for purchase, maintenance and replacement of craft and gear, trading and processing of fish, raw materials such as ice, fuel, equipment, ice boxes, containers and racks. Other small business needs petty trade, artisanal products manufacture, basic survivals food and other essentials during lean fishing season education of children, social obligations, functions relating, to marriages, funerals, personal assets and house building and repair also come under this purview. In other words credit needs of artisanal fishing communities relate to fixed capital, working capital or consumption. Artisanal fisherfolk and petty traders which include women who often happened to be wives of fishermen need fixed capital. It is often so large in relation to their income and the individual house holds had to tap several sources of credit. Buying or maintaining fishing craft and nets or

\footnote{\textsuperscript{323} G.O.Ms.No.1704, Agriculture Department, dated 19\textsuperscript{th} July 1956, TNA.}
maintaining their house these are examples of fixed capital needs.\textsuperscript{324} Working capitals need to meet fuel and labour costs also to invest in trading and processing of fish. Fuel costs have became significant because of increased mechanisation of fishing craft. An estimated cost of 15 per cent of the total credit is needed for working capital. Demand for consumption credit (other basic food or meeting social obligation) is usually a small proportion of the total credit demand. But the birth of a male child, the wedding of a daughter and the death of the head of the family necessitate fairly large sums of credit.

Banks, the main sources of formal credit, need collateral fixed assets such as houses as security for their loans. Artisanal fisher-folk and petty fish traders usually possess few such assets. Further, many banks have had bad experience in the past concerning credit fisherfolk, with vast amounts remaining unpaid.\textsuperscript{325}

Even though many banks refuse to finance to fishermen, Co-operative Central Bank in some areas (Malabar) finance the societies. The bank allows only ordinary loans repayable within a year. The societies in turn advance loans to their members during the slack season of May, June and July restricting the period invariably to 10 months.

In the course of time, the extension of loan period from one to two years and provision of cash credit facilities to the societies are greatly


\textsuperscript{325} Ibid.
beneficial to members. The failure of fishing season, often hampered the repayment of loans by fishermen. But the new Fisheries Co-operative Societies denied the facilities of finance by the Central Bank as those societies were not credit worthy.³²⁶ Loans are offered to the societies for purchase of motor boats and fish transport vans on condition that the amount should be repaid within some stipulated time with interest. But none of the societies are agreeable to the conditions and so the offer was declined.³²⁷

The Fishermen Co-operative Societies play an important role in the improvement of the economic condition of the fishermen. They depend on the Government finance. Since the commercial banks are not willing to come forward to render financial assistance to the fishermen, the Co-operative Societies come forward with their activities.

In the year 1924-25, the number of Co-operative Societies worked for the benefit of fishermen increased from 54 to 56. But they did not work satisfactorily owing to bad season.³²⁸ The year 1949-50 recorded an allround improvement and expansion in the activities of the Fishermen Co-operative Societies. At the beginning of the year, there were 91 Co-operative Societies for fishermen in the state. During the same year 14 new Co-operative

³²⁶ G.O.Ms. No.626, Agriculture Department, dated 4th March 1955, TNA.
³²⁷ Ibid.
Societies were registered. Thus the total number of members was 9,993 and the amount of working capital exceeded Rs. 3 lakhs.\textsuperscript{329}

In 1953-54 there was a remarkable progress in the growth of Fishermen Co-operative Societies. The number of societies in the State increased from 176 to 231.\textsuperscript{330}

Fishermen Co-operative Societies and District Federations are functioning in Madras, South Arcot, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts. The various assistance and relief measures such as, grants of loans, supply of boats, nylon nets and fish transport vehicles were canalised through the societies and their consideration.\textsuperscript{331}

In the beginning of establishment of the Co-operative Societies are 91, but in course of time, the number of Societies increased. During 1983-89 many more Co-operative Societies were established all over Tamil Nadu. There are 284 Marine Fishermen Co-operative Societies, 198 Inland Fishermen Co-operative Societies and 22 Fisher Women Co-operative Societies are functioning in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{332}

As Fishermen Co-operative Societies are provided with large amount of finance, it is necessary to revitalise and improve the functioning of the Co-operative Societies. In order to develop the managerial skills for the

\textsuperscript{330} Ibid., 1953-54, Madras, 1956, p.165.  
\textsuperscript{332} G.O.Ms. No.1704, Agriculture Department, dated 10\textsuperscript{th} July 1956, TNA.
betterment of the societies, the scheme of managerial assistance are given. During 1987, 200 Fishermen Co-operative Societies were provided managerial assistance and to appoint one clerk for each society for improving the functioning of the society an amount of Rs.7,20,000/- was sanctioned.\textsuperscript{333}

In the year 1986-87, there are about 4.64 lakhs marine fisher-folk and 1.52 lakhs inland fisher-folk in the State. Of which active fishermen were estimated to be about 01.02 lakh in the marine sector and about 0.52 lakh in inland sector. There are 294 Marine Fishermen Co-operative Societies and 230 Inland Fishermen Co-operative Societies in the State, especially to look after the welfare of the fishermen women, 37 Fisher Women Co-operative Societies have been organised. There are also 10 Co-operative District Federations and 5 Prawn Farming Co-operative Societies, a Boat Building Society, 9 Fish Marketing Societies and 7 Fishermen Co-operative Unions. There are 611 Fishermen Co-operative Societies are functioning all over Tamil Nadu with total membership of 8,1,41,124 fisher-folk.\textsuperscript{334} In 2000-2001, there are 484 Marine Fishermen Co-operative Societies are functioning and 2,43,001 member of fishermen are registered in the societies, and Fisher Women Co-operative Societies are 221, the total membership was 61,997.\textsuperscript{335} In every year government allotted money to Co-operative Societies. In 1990-91 and 1992 Government sanctioned a sum of Rs.10.00 lakhs for ten Societies at 1 lakh per Society with a view to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{333} Tamil Nadu Administrative Report, 1983-84, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1986, p.99.
\item \textsuperscript{334} Ibid., 1986-87, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1988, p.152.
\item \textsuperscript{335} V. Ramani Bai, Kadal Vazhamum Kadalzhali Makkalum, Sakthi Press, Chennai, 2001, pp.98-126.
\end{itemize}
extend their service assistance to increase their borrowing power and to mobilise external finance for their activities.  

The primary aim of Fishermen Co-operative Societies are building a sound economy, they have taken different schemes such as, sale of fishery inputs, crafts and gears and canalisation of loans from the government and Co-operative Banks to its members. Recently some Co-operative Societies are running fair price shops, which also supply consumer goods to their members.

Thrift Scheme

Want of thrift scheme was the main cause of the indebtedness of fisherfolk. So Co-operative Societies of a special kind had been organised for them. This was popularised through Hundi boxes provided for each member. Many societies keenly follow the system. Thrift was encouraged among the fishermen by including them to deposit in the fishery season.

In many Societies cess collection are in vogue. This was a method of compulsory saving by collection of a nominal amount at the rate of 1 to 3 paise on every mound of salt purchased by the member curers in the fish caring yards. This amount so saved was used to liquidate the loans taken by members. This system was introduced in all the societies.

According to the by laws of these societies, each number had to pay a share capital of Rs.25/- to Rs.50/- in easy installments spread over 3 to 5 years, and in the majority of the cases, these societies were able to carry on their business without any loans from the Central Banks. The great difficulty was to get literates among them to write the accounts, but when schools were opened in these villages it was possible to utilise the services of the teachers for this work. Hence, F.A. Nicholson put forth his ideas to the government that “the development of the fisheries department as one of its primary duties”. Government was also agreed to his ideas. Nowadays this system evaluated and followed by all the Co-operative Societies.

Another scheme introduced by Fisheries Department through the Co-operative, is known as National Fishermen Savings-cum-Relief Scheme. This scheme is very helpful to the fishermen in the lean season. The active marine fishermen between the age of 18 and 60 are eligible to be the member of Fishermen Co-operative Societies. They should not be a government employee and should not own mechanised boats/landing craft. They are recommended by the Director of Fisheries. Every member is expected contribute Rs.75/- per month for 8 months (75 x 8 = 600). After eight months the state government granted Rs.300/- i.e. 50 per cent. So total relief amount payable to each fishermen is Rs.1200/- for the lean season. The lean season is varying from district to district. For example December

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338 G.O.Ms. No.852, Development Department, dated 17th May 1921, TNA.
339 G.O.Ms. No.2049, Revenue Department, dated 27th May 1918, TNA.
to March in Kanyakumari District, March to June in Tirunelveli and Tuticorin and September to December in other coastal districts.\textsuperscript{340}

Fish catching has been one of man’s oldest occupations and it has acquired importance only as an industry. The development of this industry depends on the welfare of the fishermen community as a whole. Fishermen Co-operative Societies are established with the aim of rendering all possible help to them such as finance, modern equipments, cold storage facilities for their catches and thus paving the way for a better price for their catches and welfare of the community.\textsuperscript{341}

The coastline of Madras State runs over a distance of 997.\textsuperscript{3}47 kms. (620 miles) and the inland water cover an area of about 9,01,080 acres. There are about 2,53,209 marine fishermen in this state. Almost all the marine \textit{kuppams} have been by the Co-operatives.\textsuperscript{342}

Further, the schemes such as Integrated Rural Development Programme, Drought Prone Area Programme and Member Education Programme have also gained considerable importance in the state. Fishery Co-operative Movement forms all other activities. Canalisation of the loans from governments to their members has been the main activity of the Fishery Co-operatives especially primaries. Thus most of the primary Co-operative Societies are only credit societies and few have undertaken marketing of

\textsuperscript{340} \textit{Endeavour and Archives, 2003-2004}, Department of Fisheries, Government of Tamil Nadu, p.15.
\textsuperscript{342} \textit{Ibid.}
fish. The main functions of the societies was the issue of loans to members at a low rate of interest. The maximum long term loan of about Rs.400/- is issued to the member for the purchase of craft and equipment repayable in 10 years. The medium term loan up to Rs.300/- repayable to five years is issued per month. The short term loan of a maximum amount of Rs.400/- (for marine) Rs.200/- (for inland) per society are issued payable in a year. Moreover, some of the societies were formed only to take the loans from government. Many societies, however run also ration departments. The works of the societies are supervised by a special co-operative staff lent by the Co-operative Department.

The Federation of Fishermen Co-operative Societies has been formed to aid fish marketing, supply of fishery requisites and promote the welfare of fishermen and their villages.

The primary societies of a region are affiliated for a Fishermen Co-operative Federation. The Fishermen Co-operative Federation is a Central Institution which obtains the fishing requisites for their affiliated societies and distributes them to individuals through primary societies.

The Federation of Fishermen Co-operative Society can be divided into two. They are;

344 G.O.Ms. No.272, Agriculture Department, dated 4th February 1956, TNA.
346 G.O.Ms. No.272, Agriculture Department, dated 4th February 1956, TNA.
347 *Fisheries Administrative Report for the year 1994-95*, Department of Fisheries, Tamil Nadu, p.2.
i) Fishermen Co-operative Marketing Union; and

ii) District Fishermen Co-operative Federations.

The Fishermen Co-operative Marketing Union has been organised to undertake the marketing of fish for the members of the Fishermen Co-operative Societies, while the District Fishermen Co-operative Federations were organised to co-ordinate the activities of Primary Fishermen Co-operative Societies.\(^\text{348}\)

Fishermen Co-operative Marketing Union was established under the Second Five Year Plan. It was started on 7\(^{th}\) October 1956. It issued loans for discharging prior debt and for purchasing crafts and tackles. Its members have taken licenses for fishing in reservoirs. All the members get licenses and market their catches through the society. The department boat and the motor van have been given to the society on hire, which were hitherto engaged by the merchants. Nearly 90 per cent of fishermen who fish in the reservoir have joined the society.

To develop the activities of the Fishermen Societies, settle matters of common interest, such as procuring facilities, purchasing of yarn, logs, boats and in common acts as agents of the societies central organisations called District Fishermen Co-operative Federations have been started at Madras, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Tuticorin.\(^\text{349}\) The main objectives of the Federation is to provide facilities for modern methods of marketing, which will include quick handling, quick transport and preservation of fresh fish.

\(^{348}\) Ravi Acharya, *op.cit.*, pp.902-905.

The Societies have contributed a sum of Rs.1000/- to Rs.2000/- each as share capital to the Federation. In addition to the above share capital, government have also granted share capital loan of Rs.2000/- to each of the Federations, repayable after five years in ten half yearly installments. Under the scheme each society has been granted loans to forty members not exceeding Rs.500/- per member or 2000/- per working unit and not exceeding Rs.20,000/- per society.\textsuperscript{350} The loans are granted to fishing comprising generally of three or four members on the personal security of two or more members of solve on the mortgage of unencumbered immovable property belonging to the borrower or borrowers. The fishing equipments such as crafts and tackles purchased out of the loans shall be mortgaged to the society. The crafts and tackles for purchase of which the loans have been issued shall be purchased within one month from the date of issue of the final installment within three months from the date of issue of the first installment, whichever is earlier. The District Federation assists the societies in purchasing yarn, soil cloth in bulk at ex-mill rate and distributing them to the member societies charging a very low commission just enough to meet the handling charges.\textsuperscript{351}

The assistance to Fishermen Co-operatives has decreased from Rs.26.19 lakhs during the Second Five Year Plan to Rs.14.13 lakhs in the Fifth Five Year Plan, although the actual outlay has increased to Rs.92.5 lakhs. In spite of all these incentives the performances of the Fishery Co-operatives is far from satisfactory and most of the Societies have been

\textsuperscript{350} Ibid., p.24.
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., p.24.
liquidated.\textsuperscript{352} Further, very few Fishermen Co-operative Societies have undertaken marketing, mainly inputs, consumer goods, occasionally fish and most of these are running into losses.\textsuperscript{43}

The general structure of Fishery Co-operatives is divided into two tier system with Primary Fishermen Co-operatives at the base level and District Fishermen Co-operative Federation and Co-operative Fish Marketing Unions at higher level to fishing grounds marine and inland waters. All the primaries are at the village or \textit{kuppam} level. A member must live in the area covered by the society, should be connected with the fishing industry above 18 years and pay a share of rupees five.\textsuperscript{353}

The Co-operative Societies suffered from several disadvantages. In reviewing the Fisheries Administrative Report for 1923-24, the government expressed the opinion that other causes besides the bad season contributed to the unsatisfactory state of Fishermen Societies. The poor fishing season was the chief cause for their unsatisfactory working. Even if the season was good, the societies would not have worked satisfactorily as their organisation and control leave much that is to be desired.\textsuperscript{354}

The rise in the transaction in the Societies was due to the fact that the money market had become tight and the fish merchants were reluctant to lend money in large sum as they did in the past. However, the fishermen had

\textsuperscript{352} Ravi Archarya, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.902-905.
\textsuperscript{353} \textit{Ibid.}, p.905.
\textsuperscript{354} \textit{Administrative Report of Fisheries Department, 1924-25}, Department of Fisheries, Madras, pp.58-59.
realised their evils of borrowing from the money-lenders and fish merchants and they looked upon the Co-operative Societies for their credit needs.\(^{355}\)

In order to promote the interest of the fishermen, the Marketing Societies are established all over Tamil Nadu under the “scheme for assistance to Fishermen Co-operative Societies marketing of fish had been included in the Second Five Year Plan of the Fisheries Department.

(i) The schemes proposed to give long-term loans and subsidies to the fishermen through Co-operative Societies for the purchase of equipment and clearance of debts to money-lenders, the loans being recoverable in easy installments.

(ii) To form a central organisation, giving contribution towards the capital, with one or two groups societies and to plan marketing arrange for transport; and

(iii) To provide financial assistance to societies and federation for the construction of small godowns and curing sheds, wherever necessary half as long term loans and the remaining half as subsidy.\(^{356}\)

Selling of the catches for a reasonable price was a problem faced by the fishermen. This problem was solved by the Co-operative Societies. Societies undertook the pooling together of the catches of their members and selling them jointly to the highest bidder. This enabled them to get

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\(^{355}\) *Ibid., 1952-53*, p.41.

\(^{356}\) *Ibid., p.41.*
better prices and to collect their dues easily. Besides this, the Societies got a small commission of 6 ¼ per cent.

The needs of the fishermen should be met by collective manner. Societies maintained fair price shops and supplied food grains to the fishermen. Societies sold mill cloth or cotton yarn to fishermen under the scheme of yarn subsidy. The Fisheries Department supplied them yarn at subsidised rates through the Societies with the easy availability of yarn at reasonable prices. It is also purchased coir yarn and sold to their members. The Societies had obtained licenses to deal in yarn for sale to members for manufacture of nets. The distribution of yarn at subsidised rates gave the necessary impetus to the formation and working of these societies.\(^{357}\)

The women folk of the fishermen community engaged themselves in the economic development of their own. So the improvement of the womenfolk, the government formed the society called “The Women Fish Net Makers Co-operative Society”. All the women are the members of this Society. This society has turned out a tremendous work and manufactured quite a larger number of nets. The Registrar of Co-operative Societies granted a subsidy of Rs.300/- for a period of 6 months for the employment of clerk-cum-salesman to keep accounts and to find out market for the accumulated stock.

The production of the fishing nets by the societies helped the fishermen to get them at reasonable price. The societies issued yarn to the members who made nets and on payment of wages supplied them to the

\(^{357}\) G.O.Ms. No.626, Agriculture Department, dated 4\(^{th}\) March 1955, TNA.
societies. Different kinds of nets needed for the local fishermen were thus made and sold.

The establishment of fish storage godowns and fish curing stores requires a huge sum of money, which could not be done by the economically backward fishermen. Thus the Government had done it for the welfare of the fishermen. Fish godowns were owned by the Fisheries Co-operative Societies and collected rent for providing storage facilities from their members.  

In order to the improvement of the Fisher-Women Folk, the Government of Tamil Nadu sanctioned and established Fisher Women Co-operative Societies as a pilot project in three places, viz., Tiruchinankuppam in Chingleput District, Adirampattinam in Thanjavur District and Tharvuaikulam in Tirunelveli District by which the fisher women united under the community organisation reap benefits there by. These three Cooperatives were facilitated with a government working loan assistance of Rs.20,000/- and a share capital of Rs.5000/- for a fisher women member who pay a share capital of Rs.10/- each. The working loan is released for running of fair price shop marketing of fish purchase of nylon and other business activities. Wherever governmental assistance is provided or not marketing loans are being arranged for the fisher women from Nationalised Banks like the UCO Bank, Central Bank of India, Canara Bank and State Bank of India. In later days Fisheries Department was to establish many Fisher

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358 G.O.Ms.No. 625, Agriculture Department, dated 4th March 1955, TNA.
Women Co-operative Societies in Tamil Nadu level. Now-a-days these Societies are well functioned and relief the money burden.

The co-operative organisation among the fishermen, will no doubt play a vital role to defend the fishermen from economic distress and social evils. As the improvement of the economic and social interest of this downtrodden, but a very useful community to the consuming public is a vital importance to the country as a whole, the Government of India have placed funds at the disposal of the Government of Tamil Nadu for granting long term loans to fishermen and have also agreed to meet 25 per cent of the cost of supervisory staff.\textsuperscript{360}

The principles of Co-operative Societies are voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, co-operation among co-operatives and concern for community.\textsuperscript{361}

The advantages of co-operation are well known and require no repetition. In the fishing industry investments must precede saving and this is possible only if there is a mechanism to link credit with marketing. This mechanism can be supplied best by co-operatives. Co-operation is also the best agency to develop subsidy occupational activities. In fact it has been emphasised that the co-operation is the ideal institution for reconstructing the entire social and economic life of the country exclusively fishermen by participating in the day-to-day monetary support of the wage earners.

\textsuperscript{360} Madras Information, Vol.XI, No.8, August 1957, p.23.
\textsuperscript{361} Interview with Thiru. G.John Doss, Clerk, Fishermen, Co-operative Society, Mulloorthurai, on 23th October 2005.