CHAPTER 6

FISHING GEARS

The fishes were collected from the commercial catches brought by different Fisheries Cooperative Societies to Bhakra Landing Centre. Each society has 100-200 fishermen belonging to different villages, to which certain fishing areas have been allotted. The State Fisheries Department initially provided loans and subsidies for the purchase of motorised boats and fishing nets. The approximate cost of the boat is about Rs. 40,000. It is operated by diesel engine of 16 HP., costing another Rs. 28,000. However, in an emergency the boat can be operated by oars.

Fishing grounds are far off from the landing centre. Normally it takes 1.5 to 3.5 hours to reach the fishing grounds. One driver and one salesman of the Fisheries Cooperative Societies form the crew of the boat. Only one motor boat is operated by each society in a specified area.

Gill nets and hook and line are used for fishing (Figs. 81, 82). The gill net is made up of nylon thread, white in colour and has a length of 60 x 8 mts. The upper
side (head line) has wooden floats and the lower side (foot line) stone sinkers. At one time several gill nets usually of permissible mesh-size (10.00, 12.50, 13.75, 16.25, 17.50, 25.00, 27.50 and 30.00 cm.) are operated. The gill nets are set in the evening and hauled up next morning. The fishes are entangled in the net between the opercular bone and the belly. They may get damaged in a bid to escape. The entire catch is transferred to the boat where fishes of small size (below one kg.), and silver carp, *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* of all sizes are degutted at the spot to prevent spoilage, and as per the conditions of the contract. The catch is then brought to the landing centre.

At the landing centre the fishes are segregated according to grades (see Chapter 4) for disposal to the contractors.

After grading, the fishes are packed in baskets containing crushed ice for transportation to the places as far as Guwahati.

Local contractors find Chandigarh and Delhi as potential markets for the disposal of common carp, *Cyprinus carpio* and silver carp, *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*. The rate varies from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per kg. Most of the fish is sold under unhygienic conditions. Indian major carps and mahseer fetch good price at Calcutta market, where they are
sold upto Rs.50 per kg. Surplus stocks are diverted to Guwahati and Siliguri markets. The rate of spoilage is directly proportional to the distance of transportation.

At present there is no provision of refrigerated vans or refrigerated rail-wagons for the transportation of fish from the landing centre to consumer centres, hence, spoilage is obvious.

The consumer acceptability of silver carp, *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* is too low though 80% of the catch is constituted by this fish. Hence, its disposal poses a problem.

The hook and line gear which is operated from the bank of the reservoir consists of a line made up of nylon thread and an iron hook. The latter is a simple curved sharp and pointed iron piece. The baited hook is attached to the line. A quill feather or reed stick is attached to the line at some distance from the bait (the bait is either a small piece of fish flesh or earthworm piece) so as to keep the hook line in position. A disturbance in the float is an indication that the fish is feeding on the bait. At this stage the alert angler pulls the line at once with a jerk and is generally rewarded with a prized catch.
Fig. 81. Gill net.

Fig. 82. Hook and line.
Fig. 81

Fig. 82