

F-10: Relationship between producer (Fisherperson) and middleperson (Trader) in fish marketing in Southern Sri Lanka

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A field survey was carried out in a coastal fishing village in Dondra in the Matara District, using a questionnaire to investigate the relationship or bilateral agreements of producer and middleperson traders. The sample consisted of 88 craftowners and 59 traders. Bilateral agreements can be seen in the marketing system where the producers are tied up with middlepersons. Commission agents, wholesalers and assemblers, who are the middlepersons, do their business on a large scale and have bilateral agreements with producers. Retailers, except for their friendship, do not have any trade agreements with the producer.

High basic investment and high running cost are the main reasons for the present situation of the producer-trader relationship. Fluctuation of daily production was also found to enhance the continuation of this relationship. Middlepersons support the producers by providing various facilities such as interest free credit for the purchase of crafts and fishing gear, credit to cover the daily running cost, credit for maintenance and repairing of crafts and gear, credit for daily consumption of fisherperson's family and providing credit and noncredit financial support for social events such as weddings and funerals of the producers.

As a result of this relationship, the trader is assured of a continuous supply of fish from the producers who have tied up with him. Contractual agreements are unwritten. Durations of these relationships are not fixed and depends mainly on the honesty and trust between both parties.

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