



Good news?

A STATE LEVEL SEMINAR FINALLY RECOGNIZES THAT THE FISHERIES INDUSTRY IS IN CRISIS

Kerala, INDIA

Until 1985, Kerala was unquestionably the biggest fish producer among India's coastal states. It no longer is today—and statistics show falls in production of 36% for demersal fish and 61% for that equally valuable harvest, shrimps*. During the last ten years, fishermen have protested at this drop in catches, but officialdom did not feel that the situation warranted concern. But this is now no longer the case. Today, scientists, administrators and unions jointly face the sad reality—and the near disaster occasioned by the modernisation of fisheries initiated by the Indo-Norwegian project which was so brilliantly signalled by the Indian Government as a "blue revolution.

At a seminar staged over two days in July 1987 a number of leading scientists, local government delegates and union representatives sat down to review the situation. The seminar drew attention to the overfishing of demersal fish and the blunders perpetrated through mechanization and profit-driven concentration on fishing for shrimp in shallow waters. Much was said about the problems of stock control, fishing regulations, aquaculture and the role women played in the industry.

The minister responsible for fishing matters promised a "thorough review' of the seminar's conclusions... could this be seen as a ray of hope for the fisheries?