

Promoting Safety at Sea

Naval architect Revanoor Ravikumar, who has been associated with the BOBP for a long time in varied capacities, has now joined the FAO to promote safety at sea in the Bay of Bengal region.

He is the Regional Project Coordinator for South Asia for the project "Safety at Sea for Small-Scale Fisheries in Developing Countries" (GCP/GLO/158/SWE). It is based at the BOBP-IGO office in Chennai. He'll work closely with the IGO in implementing the project in Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Ravikumar graduated in naval architecture from IIT Kharagpur. Soon after graduation, he worked for a while in England with Water Craft, specialists in FRP boats; then with Gladstone Lyall & Co (who set up India's first FRP boatyard in 1971) for constructing shrimp trawlers in Mangalore; he helped set up Aquamarine, another FRP boatbuilder, in 1975 in Chennai.

His first assignment for the FAO was as a consultant in the late '70s to a UNDP-funded Pelagic Fisheries Project, based in Cochin. Ravi assisted the project by designing an FRP purse seine vessel and installing a prototype chilled seawater system in a carrier boat for small pelagic fish.

Ravi joined the BOBP in 1979 soon after its inception. He helped develop beachlanding craft for India's east coast, and designed the fiberglass IND-20 used in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. He trained boatbuilders of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in FRP boat construction.

While with the BOBP, he coordinated a series of IMO-funded projects on 'Cleaner Fisheries Harbours' in India, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

He was also Programme Manager *ad interim* for the Third Phase of BOBP that dealt with fisheries management. He was associated with computerization of BOBP's accounts.

The Safety at Sea Project:

"Safety at Sea" is an often neglected facet of fishery management in South Asia, particularly in the small-scale fisheries sector. More often than not, it is due to a combination of inadequate awareness of its importance; lack of safety guidelines for fishing craft and methods; poor distress-response in terms of both strategies and infrastructure; and lack of enforceable rules and regulations.

FAO has designed a Global Safety at Sea Programme, aimed at improving the livelihood of small-scale fishing communities by decreasing the number of accidents at sea and the effects of such accidents. The SIDA-funded Project for South Asia is a component of that Programme.

Proposed activities of this South Asia project are:

- Awareness-building to promote a safety-at-sea culture within the fishing community and other stakeholders;
- Education and training of trainers, extension workers and fisherfolk to understand sea safety requirements;
- Introduction of FAO/IMO/ILO draft guidelines for design and construction and equipment of small FRP fishing vessels in a manner easily understood by the



small-scale boat building industry;

- Support to the elaboration of proposals for including and implementing safety regulations as part of fishery management measures;
- Review of reporting systems for accidents-at-sea and design of an appropriate reporting and analysis procedure for implementation by appropriate authorities;
- Promote gender and HIV/AIDS awareness raising campaigns in connection with safety-at-sea awareness campaigns;
- Promote adequate representation of women and youth in the safety-at-sea work ethic.

The Project will be implemented in the BOBP-IGO member-countries. To start with, activities concerning awareness building on the need for a safety-at-sea culture within the small-scale fishing communities of the region will be implemented.

