Evaluation of policy measures to prevent collision of fishing boats with merchant ships in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone

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Rajdeep Mukherjee and Yugraj Singh Yadava
Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation, 91 Saint Mary’s Road, Abhiramapuram, Chennai - 600 018, India
rmukherjee@bobpigo.org
Fishing is a traditional coastal activity while shipping is a sunrise sector for India....

• Marine fisheries practice along the 7000+ km coast line of India.

• Supports about 4 million people.

• Generates a revenue of USD 7559 million at point of first sale (about 0.4% of GDP at current prices) in 2017.

• Shipping became a strategic sector post-independence.

• Contributes about 2% of the GDP. Projected to create 10 million employment in the next 10 years.

Ref. (1) National Marine Fisheries Census 2010
(2) http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=147473
The problem...

- During the last decade, non-powered small fishing vessels have been replaced by powered larger fishing vessels.
- Fishing zones have extended from near shore to the high seas.
- Regional and national economic development and port-led growth strategies have increased the shipping traffic in the region.
In India, in 2017 there were four major collisions. About 16 cases of alleged collisions are under investigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (Hours)</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Dead</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Vessel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11-06-2017</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Kerala offshore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-11-2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-08-2017</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>40 NM from the Neendakara</td>
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<td>1Sunk</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>harbour</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-10-2017</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45 NM off Kozhikode coast</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sunk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NM</td>
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<tr>
<td>01-03-2012</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Kerala offshore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sunk</td>
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Evaluating the policy measures

**Collisions: Factors**

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<th>Technical failure/maneuverability issues</th>
<th>Negligence</th>
<th>Lack of knowledge</th>
<th>Undefined rules</th>
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The fisheries governance framework of India...

The general governance of the Maritime sector of the country is through more than 20 Central Acts and more number of local legislations administered through several agencies with varying degrees of delegation of authorities.

Ref: A Sukumaran
Existing legal and policy framework have scope for ensuring COLREGS, subject to...

- Registration (Fitness, seaworthiness, Home Port, Call sign). Does not cover navigational skill of captain and crew.

- Central Institute for Fisheries Nautical Engineering and Training - Vessel Navigator Course (VNC)

  - Focus on developing deep sea fishing
  - Importance of fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance
  - Registration of boatyard – likely to improve quality of fishing vessels

- Provincial policies are still based on 2004 Fisheries Policy – yet to integrate elements of safety at sea in line with NPMF 2017
In case of a collision, Ministry of Shipping (MoS), a minor partner in fisheries, feels the impact

• MoS through DG-Shipping and BOBP-IGO organized a National Workshop (24-25 Jan 2018)

• MoS proposed a set of Standard Operating Protocols for fisheries.

• Proactive involvement from various fisheries agencies and fisher organizations at National and Provincial levels still to come.

• Control at harbours not established.
Increasing fisheries-dependant population and mechanization

From where the fishing vessels captains are coming?

Rapid mechanization of fishing fleet in India

Thousands

- Powered
- Non-Powered

Computed from National Marine Fisheries Censuses
Knowledge and awareness of captains of fishing vessels – Survey results from Chennai Fishing Harbour

- N = 61
- 99% of captains (drivers) have not undertaken any training.
- Skills are learned by doing. A crew can become driver after 8-10 years of experience.
- Unfamiliarity with English - the language in which most of the knowledge materials are available.
Message from the shipping sector - organize your home first – called for Standard Operating Protocols (SoPs)

✓ Ships are modern and well equipped
✓ Ships crew are competent & qualified on COLREGs
✓ Fishing vessels to not impede passage of merchant ships
✓ Fishing vessels crew to be properly manned and trained for basic COLREGs applications
✓ Licensing / certifications of fishermen on COLREGs basic
✓ Fishermen awareness: as a minimum to - COLREGs Rule 5, Rule 8, Rule 26 and Annex II
✓ Correct usage of SMCPs (Minimum knowledge)
Views of the fisheries sector

- **Custodian of the sea/ children of the sea**
- Ships often fail to recognize their signals (proven true in some cases elsewhere in the world. Under investigation in India).
- Ships do not keep proper look out (proven true in some cases elsewhere in the world. Under investigation in India).
Finding a solution?

• Establishing and adherence to SoPs seems to be the best route
  • Agreed implementable solution is questionable – both ships and fishing vessels and fish shoals flows with the current.

• Shipping industry and fishing industry dialogue
  • Shipping industry claimed unfounded allegation – out of court settlement
  • Fishers claimed apathy/under-compensation.
  • However, no stakeholder-to-stakeholder dialogue, so far

• Government as mediator?

• Improving fisheries management – resource base – holistic solution – Safety is an integral part of fisheries management.

• Targeted training programme/knowledge dissemination during seasonal closure.
Evaluation results – partial approach

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<th>Technical failure/ maneuverability issues – Establish SoPs</th>
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1. Error in judgement (Blame game)
2. Technical failure/ maneuverability issues – Establish SoPs
3. Negligence (Blame game)
4. Lack of knowledge (Training-DADF/MoS)
5. Undefined rules- Establishes SoPs (MoS)
**Rules of the Sea**

- **Keep a constant lookout, especially at night.**
  - Use a red light to project light safety from the boat.

- **Do not pass too closely to other vessels.**
  - Avoid passing too closely to other vessels to prevent collisions.

- **Do not change course or speed without warning.**
  - Always signal your intention to change course or speed.

- **Do not cross the path of another vessel.**
  - Always keep a safe distance from other vessels to avoid collisions.

- **Do not proceed in fog.**
  - If visibility is poor, stop and remain stationary until visibility improves.

- **Use your radio.**
  - If you have a VHF radio, keep it on channel 16 and monitor other channels.

- **Do not block the visibility of other vessels.**
  - Avoid blocking the view of other vessels by keeping a safe distance.

- **Do not engage in reckless or hazardous operations.**
  - Avoid any actions that may put you or others at risk.

- **Know which signals to use.**
  - Use the appropriate signals to communicate intentions.

- **Keep a safe distance from ships.**
  - Maintain a safe distance from ships to avoid collisions.

- **Avoid passage through shipping lanes or areas where the movement of vessels is high.**
  - Stay clear of established shipping lanes.

**Dos and Don'ts to Avoid Collision of Fishing Boats with Ships**

- **Do not sail in or pass near inhabited areas.**
  - Respect local laws and avoid entering inhabited areas.

- **Do not sail near the shore.**
  - Keep a safe distance from the shore to avoid collisions.

- **Do not sail in bad weather.**
  - Avoid sailing in bad weather conditions.

- **Do not sail without proper equipment.**
  - Ensure you have all necessary equipment before sailing.

- **Do not sail at night without proper lighting.**
  - Use proper lighting to be visible to other vessels.

**Important Points**

- **Pay attention to the weather.**
  - Always be aware of the weather conditions and its impact on sailing.

- **Stay out of the way.**
  - Avoid any actions that may put other vessels at risk.

**Contact Information**

- **Emergency Contact:**
  - (Contact information as per local regulations or guidelines)