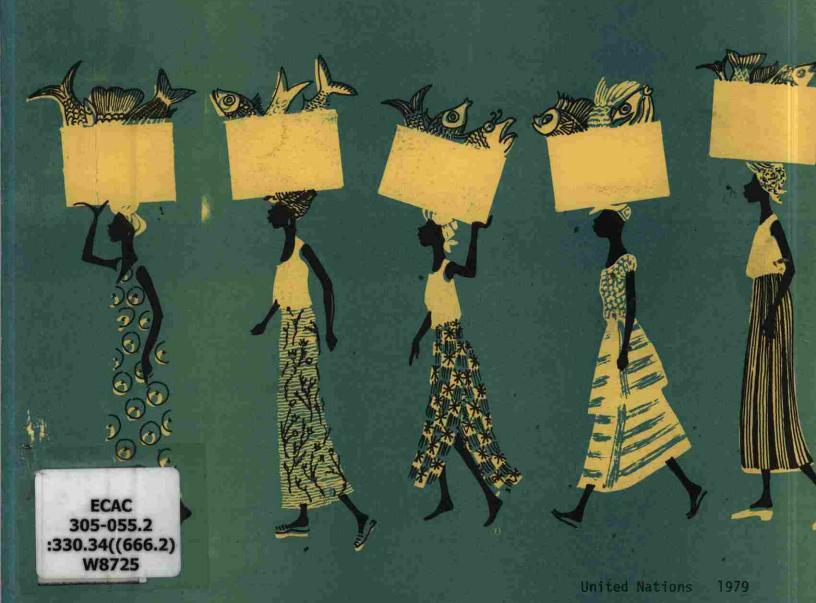
Research Series



WOMENand the FISHING INDUSTRY in LIBERIA



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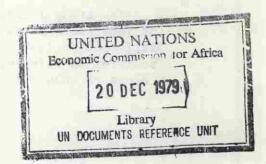
WOMEN AND THE FISHING

INDUSTRY IN LIBERIA :

MEASURES OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

by

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ATRCW/FORD Foundation

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Abstract

This study represents an attempt to measure the extent of participation of women in development. It approaches this through a case study of women in the fishing industry in Liberia, concentrating on their participation in industrial fishing.

The subject of the case study is of particular interest from two dimensions. Foremost, the research is concerned with the participation of women in the "informal" urban sector of a developing economy and secondly, the industry in Liberia exhibits interesting linkages between the "formal" modern sector and the "informal" urban sectors. More significantly, the key to such linkages are a specialized group of Liberian market women - "Fishmammies".

The study identifies and measures the part played by women in the intersectoral dependence and the extent and nature of their participation in the growth and development of the industry, thereby providing baseline data on what is happening to women during the process of change in different concrete settings.

DEDICATION

THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED

T O

THE FISHMAMMIES

"THE LIFE-BLOOD"

O F

LIBERIA'S FISHERIES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost among those to be acknowledged is the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) which financed the study, and following closely there upon, the Fishmammies who are the major subject of the study. Special mention must also be made of the management of Liberia's industrial fishery complex, whose cooperation was essential to the conduct of the research. Thanks must also go to the agents at various fish distribution centres in the country and particularly to the Camp Johnson Road (Monrovia) Agent, whose cooperation was even more critical.

To all those with whom discussions were held in the course of the study, to the officials of the Bureau of Fisheries at the Ministry of Agriculture and Mr. Kini Freeman, (Consultant to the Ministry of Agriculture on the Fisheries, through whom I obtained insights into the fishing sector as a whole) in particular, I remain indebted.

In addition, I am grateful to the Liberian Red Cross Society which very kindly provided the research team with office facilities, at no cost, throughout the research project. A special "thank-you" is due Ms. Danielle Bernard for her secretarial services performed in typing the various drafts of the report, not to mention some rather demanding tables.

Lastly, I would like to thank all members of the research team for their contribution. In particular, I would like to highlight the role and contribution of my research assistant, Kenneth Forkey, without whose dedication and conscientiousness the rather detailed and tedious computations required to develop the relevant measures of women's participation would have proved virtually insurmountable! Instead, a Herculean task was successfully undertaken.

This report and its overall conclusions, including any errors contained therein, remain the responsibilities of the Consultant and do not in any way reflect the views of the Economic Commission for Africa.

Olubanke Akerele Monrovia

January 1979

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DEFINITIONS

1. FORMAL SECTOR

The organized wage sector of the economy genrally employing modern technology and having more formal relationships between employer and employees. Employment in this sector is in some senses considered "protected", by the action of trade unions, governments or both acting together.

Economic activities in this sector are enumerated in government statistics on employment and output.

2. INFORMAL SECTOR

Those economic activities, primarily found in urban centres (though not limited to them) of developing nations, that are generally not reflected in official statistics and can be more appropriately equated with the "traditional" urban sector. The informal sector is characterised by small scale activities, simple technologies and labour intensive unregulated and highly competitive workers, and low average earnings, together with a large range of earnings possibilities, providing services primarily for those in "informal" sector.

Relationships between the enterprises in the informal sector and other enterprises or households (in their capacity of productive units) their workers or other institutions, are informal ones.

3. ARTISANAL FISHERIES

The "canoe" fishing industry.

4. INDUSTRIAL FISHERY

The modern commercial fishing industry employing modern technology in its activities.

5. DEPOTS

Sales distribution centres of the industrial fishery complex which form the first step in the distribution channel for its product.

6. AGENTS

Those who have contracts with the industrial fishery complex to manage and operate its depots, being technically the company "salesmen".

7. "TICKET"

The equivalent of a "sales invoice" which documents the number and type of cartons of fish "taken on credit" by a mammy under any one of the payment systems in operation at the various depots.

8. "SUSU"

Based on the traditional system of pooling of labour resources - "ku" system - and services within a group so as to meet various needs in the rural areas, susu has developed in the urban environment into a form of short-term savings and loan instrument (generally without interest) whereby a group of people pool a certain amount of their resources on a monthly basis and apportion the total amount to each member of the group in turn.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The New International Economic Order - a concept arising out of "persisting inequalities in the global economic system" whose main elements were articulated in a series of resolutions on development and international cooperation at various international forums beginning in the mid-1970's 1/ forms the context for the present study. Stated briefly, the goal of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) is an equitable sharing of the world's resources among all its people; the means is reform of existing structures of dependency of the poor countries and people of the rich nations by the creation of a NIEO. 2/ Concomitant with changes at the global level, there has to be restructuring of the economic order at the national and regional levels.

In the African environment, the areas identified for national action and in which African nations can themselves affect the creation of the NIEO have been outlined by the ECA. 3/ These include (a) the deliberate promotion of an increasing measure of self-reliance; (b) the acceleration of internally located and relatively autonomous processes of growth and diversification, and (c) the progressive eradication of unemployment and mass poverty. Indeed, Africa has not escaped the phenomenon observed in other developing regions of the "dynamics of economic development (appearing) to work against the very poor". 4/

The foregoing implies an emphasis on balanced development through intersectoral dependence, involving linkages among industrialization, rural transformation and human resources development. 5/ From this follows the recognition of the need for full utilization of Africa's human resources in the achievement of these goals. Hence emerges the concern that the potential of all groups in the society be duly considered and that targets of development action be set for special groups, including the urban poor, the rural masses and women. In establishing the NIEO the role of women in the development process is to be taken into account, as laid down in the World Plan of Action adopted in Mexico City during International Women's Year (1975). 6/ Following this, Resolution 3505(XXX) of the United Nations General Assembly (December 1975) requested that the Secretary General prepare a report on the extent to which women participate in agriculture, industry, and trade, with a view to making recommendations on ways and means of increasing and upgrading the participation of women in those fields.

Thus, the need to identify, document and assess the current position of women in production and distribution activities is a central part of the development planning exercise. In Africa, studies have documented the role of women in the food economy as well as the critical role played by them in the marketing and trading systems. Recently, emphasis at the ECA African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) has focused on ways of measuring and monitoring the participation and integration of women, as compared to men, in economic activities and their access to

available means of development. This in turn has resulted in efforts to develop a set of indicators that will measure women's changing situation in their economies.

JUSTIFICATION FOR STUDY

As part of its efforts to develop such indicators, the ATRCW has engaged national consultants to undertake studies designed to produce such indicators at the individual country level. Within this context the present consultant was engaged for a five month period July through November 1978. The specific terms of reference called for the development of indicators to measure and/or monitor the extent of participation and/or integration of women in development in Liberia. Given the paucity of statistics on the basis of which to monitor women's participation in development in Liberia, the consultant decided to approach the task by undertaking a case study of industrial fishing—an industry that has experienced considerable changes and growth in the recent past and in which women perform critical roles in two areas: processing and marketing.

The industry appeared particularly interesting and ideal for study since it would permit an analysis of women's changing position against the background of structural change and development over time. Of equal significance is the fact that the industry, while primarily representative of formal modern wage sector employment exhibits interesting linkages between that sector and the traditional urban informal sector. 7/ The key to such linkages are a particular group of Liberian market women - the "Fishmammies". Lastly, the study is concerned with one of the special groups which the NIEO emphasizes - the urban poor.

Accordingly, the study should be seen as an effort to provide a quantitative empirical analysis of the dynamics of women's participation in economic development, viz. - a case study of the role of women in industrial fishing in Liberia. Thus, the specific objectives of the study are:

- (a) To determine and identify the importance of women in industrial fishing in Liberia.
- (b) To quantitatively measure this and analyze the factors affecting their role. As such, the study will:
 - (1) identify the role played by women in industrial fishing;
 - (2) provide quantitative measures of their importance to the industry;

- (3) measure the degree of women's integration and participation in the growth and development of the industry and the returns they earn;
- (4) identify the part played by women in the intersectoral dependence (modern formal sector and traditional urban informal sector) in the fishing industry.
- (5) present a picture of the condition of women in the industry through variables or indices of what is happening to women. This will be done by analysis of questionnaire results from a field survey of the fishmammies.

The above will be presented against the background of structural changes that have occured in the development of the industry. The study therefore throws light on how structural changes can affect the position of certain groups, in this case, the urban poor. Comparative perspective by references to developments in a similar industry in Ghana is also presented.

METHODOLOGY

Since the topic was a new area for research with few documentary sources, an approach using several complementary methodologies was adopted to yield the necessary data. Lacking established sources the data had to be generated.

Since one major company for all practical purposes comprises the comprise of one industrial fishing industry in Liberia, the cooperation of that company and its sales representatives were crucial to the development of quantitative measures and to the success of the entire exercise. The first step in the project was feasibility study to determine whether and to what extent the study could be undertaken, and whether the necessary cooperation would be obtained from those involved. Prior to the commencement of the consultancy, preliminary discussions were held with those concerned with the industry to explain the purpose of the proposed study and to solicit their cooperation. During that same period efforts were made to find out about the fisheries sector as a whole and a "literature search" began. At this stage a research assistant was engaged on a part-time basis. He became full time and remained throughout the project.

Once the initial cooperation was obtained from the management of the industrial fishery complex (which also expressed keen interest in the project) the month of July was spent still undertaking an assessment of the project's feasibility. Contacts established during the earlier phase were carried one step further and efforts were made to better understand the proposed area of study, to assess what data existed over time that could be utilized for our purposes, and whether those concerned would actually permit access to this data. A form of daily record keeping on loose sheets of paper that could form the basis for development of the kind of quantitative data necessary was discovered. Examples of the form of some of these sheets can be found in the annexes. These were records of cartons of fish sold by each "fishmammy" and her "sub-mammies".

Once such records were identified, it was soon realized that their extraction would require some clerical assistance. Three clerical assistants were engaged to assist in the extraction of raw data from records at the relevant depot sites (or fish distribution centres) in the greater Monrovia area. An attempt was made to compile data available for as many years as possible, generally from 1976-1978 though not in every case was information available for all the "fishmammies" concerned.

This data was to provide the basis for historical analysis of one aspect of the women's role in the industry. Difficulties arose, however, resulting from non-cooperation at varying intervals on the part of the depot's agents, refusing to allow access to their "loose sheets of paper". Work would begin in earnest for a week, and then excuses were made for not allowing the research to continue. This in turn required a request to the company's sales representatives to intervene and persuade the relevant depot agents to cooperate. The cooperation would be then assured, only to be withdrawn as the work proceeded. The agents concerned seemed to be anxious that the research was actually an audit, despite assurances to the contrary from the researchers and from the company's management. This issue was eventually resolved at one of the Monrovia depots when the agent concerned gained confidence in our endeavours over time; at the second key Monrovia depot, however, we continued to experience "ups and downs" in research cooperation throughout the study, resulting in work delays.

Given this experience, it was decided to undertake some exploratory trips outside the Monrovia area to assess the feasibility of the study coverage of such areas as well. These trips were designed to foster acquaintance with the situation in those places, to assess the availability and methods of record-keeping and to become acquainted with the women involved in these areas. The explanatory trips undertaken during mid-July to early August were critical to the success of the project as they facilitated better planning and programming of the remaining activities.

At the same time the data was being tested, we were becomming acquainted with the mammies involved in the business, gaining their confidences and, via participant observation, becoming better acquainted with other aspects of the fishing industry which formed part of the overall context of the study.

The final aspect of the approach entailed the administration of questionnaires to the mammies in the markets (throughout four counties) engaged in fish marketing, or at the depots in certain cases. The interviews were conducted during the month of September on Saturdays primarily, though in Kakata and Nimba interviews were also conducted on days other than Saturdays for reasons pertinent to their particular markets. This was the period of actual field work, when more detailed discussions were also held with each depot agent or his representative and data extracted on the mammies sales.

The collation and assessment of the raw data was done during the month of October, followed by development and construction of the relevant measures to be used as indicators of the extent of women's participation in the industry. This latter involved a considerable amount of labourious calculations and conversions. Because not all the depots had data for the same number of years, more detailed information is provided for certain depots than for others. Special mention must be made of my research assistant's role in this. His conscientiousness in this aspect of the work was superior. Since the full-time clerical assistants on the project were terminated at the end of September, he performed countless numbers of calculations required by the depot data. Contacts were re-established with personnel of the fishing industry after the field interviews for additional insights into certain aspects of the results.

To summarize, the instruments employed in the data collection were several:(1) Study of background information or research documents on distribution and marketing in Liberia, (2) discussions with industry personnel, (3) exploratory trips, (4) raw data extraction and development of data from depot sources, (5) administration of questionnaires, and (6) participant observation. All of these proved essential to the generation of the kind of baseline data required by the study; no one of them would have been sufficient to yield the necessary data. The approaches have proved complimentary and reinforcing.

For a field never before explored, such a combination of methods was the only feasible approach that could serve the objectives of the study. Conventional survey methods alone would have been insufficient. In short, while necessary because of the requirement of more basic research, some rather simple methodological approaches had to be designed rather than the more sophisticated statistical data collection approaches that would ordinarily have been utilized.

VALUE OF STUDY

The principal value of this study lies in its contribution to the development of a "solid base of knowledge" on what is happening to women during processes of changes in different concrete settings. The study does this via indentification of the impact on the economic condition of women as a result of structural changes occuring in a particular industry. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) has called for the development of just such research, which it sees as "paving the way for an innovative research and data collection infrastructure to form the basis for monitoring women's participation in development". 8/

The study's value does not stop there. It goes beyond to provide insights into a little understood phenomenon: that of the extent and nature of dependence of the modern "formal" sector on the "informal" sector, thereby identifying the kind of linkages that may tend to exist between sectors that would appear otherwise unrelated. Past studies have documented the reverse dependency, i.e. "informal" on "formal" sectors. 9/ The special value of the study in this regard is that in documenting the critical role of women in industrial fishing, it serves to underscore two things: firstly, how a modern industrial concern can and does effectively utilize traditional channels of distribution, thereby maximising the use of those resources (labour) in plentiful supply. Secondly, it illustrates the oft-observed phenomenon in the African environment, - that entrepreneurs often start off as traders and that therefore the establishment of effective support institutions and services by African Governments could well prove the missing element facilitating the further development of its entrepreneurial class, and thus maximising the comparative advantages that they may have in that particular area.

Organisation of the Study

Chapter II of the study, the fishing industry in Liberia, provides a background perspective on Liberia's marine fisheries, identifying what constitutes the industry, its structure and characteristics. It presents statistical data on the growth and development of the industry. Further it documents the kind of marketing/distribution system operating and its evolution over time in response to the changes occuring at the production end of the industry.

Chapter III defines and identifies the role and importance of women in industrial fishing. Chapter IV provides essential background to the measuring of the importance of women in the marketing aspects, while Chapter V provides actual quantitative "measures" or "indicators" of the importance of women in industrial fishing.

In Chapter VI, an analysis of the questionnaire results is presented. Here other "indicators" of women's participation in fish marketing are presented, resulting in a picture of what is happening to women in the industry. Such variables as length of time in the industry, measures of women's earnings and productivity, their socio-economic characteristics, as indicated by their husbands' occupation, are quantified.

Chapter VII extracts from the analysis of the depot records and interview results, their significance as to how women have been affected, given the changes and development in the industry.

In Chapter VIII, several implications of the study's findings are made and a number of hypotheses developed. Chapter IX contains the conclusions and Chapter X the policy recommendations. The annexes contain a series of tables plus the story of how Madam Comfort, the foremost fishmammy, introduced the "Mammy System" to the industrial fishing industry.

FOOTNOTES

- 1. Declaration on the establishment of a New International Economic Order, United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 3201 (S-U1), Sixth Special Session, May 1974; Programme of Action (General Assembly Resolution 3202 (S-U1), Sixth Special Session, May 1974; General Assembly Resolution 3362 (S-Uii) on Development and International Cooperation, Seventh Special Session, September 1975.
- 2. UNECA, The New International Economic Order: What Roles for Women, E/CN.14/ATRCW/77/WD3, 31 Aug. 1977, p. 8.
- 3. UNECA, Revised framework of principles for the implementation of the New International Economic Order in Africa, 1976-1981 (E/CN.14/ECO/90/Rev.3), June 1976.
- 4. I. Adelman and C. Morris, Economic Growth and Social Equity in Developing Countries, Stanford University, Stanford, California 1973.
- 5. See UNECA, The NIEO: What Roles for Women, p. 23.
- 6. World Plan of Action, World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 1975.
- 7. See International Labour Office: Employment Incomes and Equality-Employment Strategy Mission to Kenya, Geneva 1972.
- 8. U. Von Buchwald and Ingrid Palmer, "Monitoring changes in the conditions of women A critical review of possible approaches", UNRISD/78/C.18, Geneva 1978 (GE-78-7115).
- 9. ILO, Employment Incomes and Equality.

CHAPTER II

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THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN LIBERIA

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter draws upon four principal sources: the 1974 Population Census of Liberia, the results of interviews and discussions held with personnel of the Bureau of Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture (Liberia), discussions held with the Mesurado Fishing Company, and first-hand observations, visits and discussions by the consultant and members of the research team both at various fish landing sites in the greater Monrovia area and Buchanan, Grand Bassa County and with people involved in the fishing industry. This section documents the place of the fishing industry in Liberia and identifies the major features and characteristics of the industry.

The only published information available on the fishing industry was a five-page article, "The Fishing Industry in Liberia", printed in the first issue of The Liberian Farmer - a Ministry of Agriculture publication appearing in 1978. 1/ That article, though brief, provided the only available historical insight into the development of the industry, commenting on the economic role of the fishing industry and prospects for its development. While providing data on the demand dimension of fish consumption both present and future, quantitative data on employment in the industry was not available. The article states only that "at present, the industry provides employment for just a few thousand coastal dwellers". The 1974 population Census provides the only available published information on overall employment in the industry.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY

According to this census, a total of 432,871 persons comprise the working population aged ten years or more. Of this, approximately 71.6 per cent or 310,023 were engaged in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing. As a percentage of this, those in fishing accounted for just about 1 per cent or 3,385 persons, 93 per cent of whom were males and 240 or 7 per cent females. Of the 3,385 persons engaged in fishing, about 57 per cent were in urban areas and 43 per cent in the rural areas. An interesting comparison, in view of the study's objective, is that while 55 per cent of all males in the fishing industry are in the urban areas, almost 80 per cent of all females in fishing work in the urban areas. Women's involvement in fishing in Liberia appears to have a strong urban bias.

Efforts were made to test the accuracy of the census figures. The census was taken in February, a dry-season month and the most favourable time for the non-industrial fisheries. Another dimension was the fact that most of those engaged in non-industrial fishing are non-Liberians, primarily Fanti from Ghana, for whom fishing is a full time occupation. For the Liberians (largely Kru), on the other hand, fishing is more of a part-time matter. Lastly, from late 1972, after the closure of some

industrial fishing companies, there appeared to have been an exodus of former commercial fishermen to other neighbouring countries. 2/ Taking all these factors into consideration, informed sources at the Bureau of Fisheries feel that the census figures may have been slightly underestimated, since at its peak the artisanal fisheries would probably account for between 3-4000 employed and industrial fishing probably for about 500 or more. 3/

III. STRUCTURES OF THE FISHING AND MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS

The fishing industry in Liberia has been described as comprising a "flourishing industrial sector and an undeveloped artisanal sector". 4/There are basically three aspects to the fishing industry in Liberia: the industrial fisheries, the artisanal fisheries and inland fisheries. There is presently no aquaculture in the country, while sport fishing is insignificant.

Inland fisheries are currently receiving attention in the Ministry of Agriculture's development efforts. These are fresh water fisheries, also termed "fish farming"; their development is being promoted by Governme in the hope that it will ameliorate the protein deficiency found in the interior of the country. This type of fishing is expected to lend itself to paddy rice cultivation plus fish farm developments on farms. "Fish farms" have been established in Suakoko, Bong County, Nimba and Grand Cape Mount Countries, but development efforts have focussed more at institutional areas or "hatcheries". Such fisheries have a considerable potential for employment generation, and it is expected that women will be involved a great deal in the future of these fisheries. But for now, their involvement is minimal.

The main area of interest of the study is concerned with the industrial fishing. Since, however, the existence of the artisanal fisheries bears on the industrial fisheries, this area warrants more in depth investigation.

ARTISANAL FISHERIES

The term artisanal fishing has been used to describe the fishing done in canoes by fisher en along the Liberian coast. It has become synonomous with the "canoe industry" type fishing. The only documented information on this aspect of the industry is contained in a survey of the fisheries conducted by the Bureau of Fisheries in February 1975. 5/

The National Fisheries Survey was designed to obtain a first-hand understanding of the many components that form the chain from the production to distribution and consumption of the artisanal fish "catch". Due to limitations of funds and other logistics, however, the survey results

were incomplete, having experienced breaks of some five months (critical in the fishing season) from its beginning in February 1975 to completion in March 1976. Moreover, the economic and marketing aspects of the survey were unfortunately never undertaken. Those components would have proved relevant for the present study.

A survey of the five coastal counties and four territories in Liberia revealed a total of approximately 2634 persons engaged in full and part-time work in the artisanal fisheries. This is probably an underestimate because the survey was done in the rainy season, while employment peaks in the dry season.

Of the total manpower, 71 per cent are engaged in the industry full-time. Of these, three-quarters are fisherman and one-quarter women fish traders (fishmammies). Among the part-time workers, 54 per cent are fishermen and 46 per cent fishmammies. In artisanal fishing as a whole, there is one fishmammy for every two fishermen. A study of the fishing industry in Ghana (1952) found roughly the same ratio there. 6/

The persons engaged in artisanal fishing on a full-time basis as fisherman and traders are largely Fanti from Ghana. They operate in family-style cooperatives, the significance of which is documented below. Elsewhere the Fanti have been identified as traditional "herring" fishermen. 7/ They use "gill nets" for fishing and because they engage in "deep sea" fishing with their larger canoes, they are among artisanal fisherman the major users of outboard motors in their operations.

They distribute their catch through their wives only, hence the development of the term "fishwives". 8/ While research would be required into the details of how this operates in the Liberian context, from our investigations, it is apparent that on landing, the fish is divided among the womenfolk who bargain with their husbands about the price for which they will sell the fish. The women are also engaged in the "smoking" and "drying" of the fish. Persons knowledgeable about the area estimate that these women make a 100 per cent profit on their fish, and that the fishwives are the most financially successful of all the market women. 9/ The "Popos" as the beach seiners from Ghana are called in Liberia, are also primarily full-time fishermen. Unlike the Fanti, the men as well as the women sell fish on the beach. 10/

While the Ghanaians are full-time fishermen, Liberians tend to be part-time fishermen and fish traders. The ethnic groups represented are primarily Kru and Grebo, along with a few Vai and Bassa. They are "part-time" in the sense that they do not depend solely on fishing for their livelihood. When not involved in fishing, the Liberian fishermen (largely Kru) work on oceangoing vessels as stevedores or engage in farming. In general the Kru do not use outboard motors, as their canoes are too small. They also tend to use hooks and lines, generally less sophisticated

production techniques than the Fanti. As a result their catch tends to be smaller, and in turn, they earn less from fishing. The local Liberian fishermen generally practice subsistence fishing, as opposed to the commercial fishing of the Fanti. Only when they catch more fish than they need do their women take fish around to sell.

In general, the scale of trade in artisanal fishing is smaller (estimated in 1974 to be between 5-600 tons in canoe "catches") 11/ than in industrial fishing as will be shown in the next section, and tends to be limited to the coastal areas. The Industrial Fisheries have, however, incorporated elements of the artisanal trading system in their distribution and marketing system.

INDUSTRIAL FISHING

Background Perspective

It is difficult to give an accurate account of employment in the industrial fishing sector because the fishery relies on casual workers which it does not include in its reporting to the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. However, using diverse sources of information the order of magnitude of the labor force can be estimated.

Estimates based on figures from the shrimp export business, plus employment figures from the one fishing company currently operating, the Mesurado Fishing Company, with an addition for a number of casual workers total about 650 persons. 12/ This estimate is not far different from the "500 or more" figure quoted earlier in this chapter by fisheries' experts from the Bureau of Fisheries.

Production in this segment of the industry was valued at approximately \$10,091,000 in 1977 13/ with fish accounting for 72 per cent of this and shrimp the remaining 28 per cent. Approximately 97 per cent of the shrimp is exported, while the fish is primarily for local consumption.

While at the moment only one comapny - the Mesurado Fishing Company - is operating in the industrial fishing complex, this has not always been the case. Between 1965 and 1971 there were several other Liberian-owned industrial fishing enterprises and as well as individual boat owners operating in this sector. However, commercial fishing underwent a decline in 1972, leaving only the Mesurado Company. For the purposes of this study, then, industrial fishing is synonomous with the Mesurado Fishing Company.

Since the purpose of this study is to document the role played by the women in industrial fishing in Liberia, some insights into the growth and development of the Mesurado Fishing Company are called for, followed by a description of the fish marketing distribution system that evolved in response structural changes in the industry.



Growth and Development of the Industrial Fisheries

The year 1953 marked the establishment of mechanized commercial fishing industries in Liberia, with the formation of the first commercial enterprise, the Liberian Fishing Enterprise. With the creation of the Bureau of Fisheries within the Ministry of Agriculture, the year 1953 has also been cited as the "real beginning of the fishing industry in Liberia". 14/

The Mesurado Fishing Company (MFC) which in 1955 had three vessels under contract landing about 120 tons of fish per month, emerged from the Liberian Fishing Enterprise. 15/ Incorporated in 1962, the MFC began to expand with the building of its processing plant which signaled the use of modern equipment and improved production methods. In 1963 the Company bought its first vessel while continuing to buy from Italian vessels off the West African Coast. The Company then built refrigerated storage facilities outside Monrovia in areas with good road access, starting with Kakata, Bassa and Gbargnga, and introduced refrigerated trucks as well. During the mid-1960's the Company continued to expand, being the largest of several commercial fishing enterprises and individual boat owners that flourished between 1965-1971.

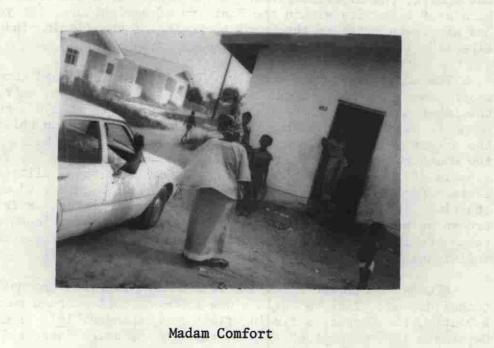
MFC has continued to expand with modern improved production techniques and plans to build a new 1500-ton cold storage room in 1979. Recently, the Company's fishing fleet has expanded. 16/ From September 1976 to September 1978, the Company sales increased by 61 per cent from 1055.60 to 1188.99 metric tons.

Evolution of Marketing/Distribution System

There appears to have been three stages in the evolution of the present structure of fish marketing. The first stage occurred at the very beginning of the establishment of commercial fisheries up to the late 1950's when anyone desiring fish could buy the fish at the gates of the Company, the site at which the "fish catch" was landed. This stage was completely unorganized and since that was the period of "non-iced" fish, that was the fastest method of distribution to avoid spoilage.

The second stage, which can be called the "Madam Comfort system"* began in the 1960-62 and can be seen as the beginning of planned and organized disutribution. Instead of waiting for potential buyers to arrive at the company's gates to buy fish, the fish was taken into the market for retailing. This became the principal method of distribution in this period. Madam Comfort is the woman who introduced the "Mammies" system to the industrial fisheries.* This was a system whereby Madam Comfort brought in women to sell fish for the company. These women came

^{*} See Annex I for Madam Comfort's account; of the origins of the system.



to be called "mammies" with Madam Comfort as the main "Mammy". The company had surety through Madam Comfort. In short, she became an intermediary for the industrial fishery and the mammies, as it was through her and the other mammies that fish began entering the market.

The third stage which began in 1962-64 and which is currently in operation was the establishment of the depot system using Lebanese merchants as agents for selling of the Company's fish. Introduction of refrigerated trucks made it possible to send frozen fish outside the Monrovia area. The industrial fishery established its depots, first in Gbarnga and then throughout the country, entering into contracts with Lebanese traders who were considered the obvious candidates for serving as the Company's fish distribution agents. The Agents received a commission from the Company for selling their fish. Previously the Mammies had dealt directly with the Company; now they had to deal with the Lebanese agents if they wanted to continue in the fish trade. This relationship is spelled out in greater detail in Chapter IV.

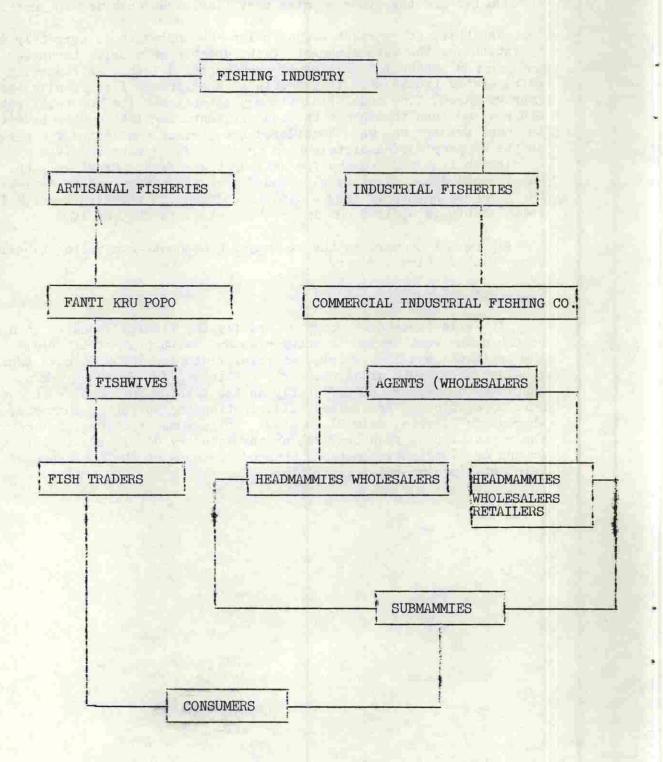
Figure I summarizes the two major components comprising Liberia's commercial fishing industry.

Comparative Perspective

It is interesting to compare briefly the fishing industry in a neighbouring West African country - Ghana - with that of Liberia. Both the artisanal and industrial commercial fisheries in Ghana have experienced considerable growth since the early fifties. 17/. In Ghana women continued to feature significantly in the fishing business as it developed more sophisticated production, distribution and marketing channels, whereas in Liberia, as will be shown, while women continued to occupy their position as fish traders, as the industry developed they lost ground as distribution methods changed because of the dominance of Lebanese merchants in commercial activities.

FIGURE I:

DIAGRAMMATICAL SUMMARY OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL IN LIBERIA



FOOTNOTES

- 1. "The Fishing Industry in Liberia", <u>The Liberian Farmer</u>, April 1978 (Ministry of Agriculture).
- Personal Interviews held with Mr. Kini Freeman, Consultant to Ministry of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries, Monrovia, Liberia, November 1978.
- 3. Ibid.
- 4. Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, <u>National Fisheries</u> Survey, February 1975.
- 5. Ibid.
- 6. R.W. Lawson and E. Kwei, (1952) African Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth: A Case Study of the Fishing Industry in Ghana, pp. 135-136.
- 7. FAO, Fish Marketing in Ghana, Rome, 1961 (FAO No. 1300).
- 8. For more details on how this operates in Ghana, see Lawson & Kwei, Fishing Industry in Ghana.
- 9. From discussions with officials of the Bureau of Fisheries, October 1978.
- 10. For more details on the difference between the Ewe and Fanti in the distribution and marketing aspect of their catch, see FAO, Fish Marketing in Ghana.
- 11. FAO/CECAF Project, Fisheries Travel Report and Aide Memoire, #7. Int/72/074/TRAN7, P-9.
- 12. Establishment Survey, Division of Industrial Statistics, Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs, Establishment Reports 1976, 1977 and 1978.
- 13. MPEA, Quarterly Statistical Bulletin of Liberia. (Summary for 1976), Monrovia, Liberia, June 1977, Table 6.2. Also, Establishment Survey, Division of Industrial Statistics, 1977, Quantity of products and Value of Sales, 1970-1977.
- 14. "The Fishing Industry in Liberia", loc. cit.
- 15. G.V. Everett, General Notes on the Fishery Sector of Liberia, Dakar 25-1-78, FAO Consultant, January 1978.
- 16. Ibid.
- 17. FAO, Fish Marketing in Ghana; Lawson & Kwei, Fishing Industry in Ghana.

CHAPTER III

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN
IN INDUSTRIAL FISHING

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INTRODUCTION

The industrial fishery is engaged in two principal operations: the production and processing of fish and shrimp. Produced primarily for the export market, shrimp production has increased greatly over the years. Fish production has been largely for the local market. In both of these operations women occupy important roles, firstly in the production and processing aspects and secondly, in their performance of critical distribution functions.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING ACTIVITIES OF THE INDUSTRIAL FISHERY

Quantitative Aspects

While there has been no census from which one could obtain a breakdown of the industrial labour force by sex, it is possible to state, given the small size of the manufacturing sector in Liberia (contributing approximately 6 per cent to the GDP) 1/ and given general knowledge about the kinds of industrial establishments in the country, that the fishing complex is amongst the few industrial operations employing a considerable number of women. Others would include the shoe factory and the biscuit factory.

Out of an estimated total employment strength of approximately 612 (excluding the estimate for casual workers) at the beginning of 1978 at the industrial fishery approximately one-third were women. When women workers are taken as a proportion of all workers at the Shrimp Export Company, the percent is as high as 60 per cent. This is a rather high proportion of women workers and is primarily due to the nature of the plant's production process that demands women's inputs. In particular, the industrial fishery utilizes women at this stage of its operation both as permanent and seasonal workers. To appreciate the reason for these two employment categories, some idea of the kind of work women engage in at the processing plant is necessary.

Qualitative Aspects 2/

Women workers are divided among three basic work areas at the processing plant: the fresh fish group, the shrimp group and the sole/fillet group. In the fresh fish group, the work is considered unskilled. After the vessels bring in the catch, the fish is sorted by size onto trays. Since the quantity of fish caught may vary, the demand for fish sorters tends to vary. Hence the greater use of women as seasonal workers in the activity. Of a total of 67 seasonal workers in late 1978 almost 70 per cent were women. In comparison, women workers accounted for 51 per cent of a total employment of approximately 180 in the processing plant at the same time. Yet at May 1978, of 81 women employed, 62 per cent (N=50) were permanent, the rest being seasonal, reflecting a smaller demand for seasonal workers at that time.

In the shrimp group, employment of women tends to be more of a permanent nature, since the work here is considered semi-skilled. Shrimp production, being geared to the export market, has to meet certain international marketing standards. In this group are women responsible for sorting the shrimp (belt girls), for weighing them (scale girls), for laying the shrimps in the pack (hand layers), glazing (glazing girls), and reweighing the shrimp. The filleting, also considered semi-skilled, involves taking the bones out as well as the skin off the fish (sole), which has to be done skillfully.

Both of these work areas require a long time to acquire the necessary skills. According to the management of the processing plant, women are felt to be patient, and given greater dexterity with their hands, tend to be more careful in handling of the shrimp, compared to men. The women's inputs are felt to be so important that if they were not to come to work, the plant would have to be shut down for a while whereas this would not necessarily be the case with the men. 4/

Female Labour Force Characteristics

Earnings of the permanently employed women tend to range between \$75 - \$125 per month, excluding skilled personnel. This compares with less than 50 \(\ell\) an hour for the seasonal workers, over an eight hour day. The bulk of the women workers are illiterate, with only about two percent having attained a seventh grade educational level. The majority of the women are young, in their early thirties at the most, while about ten per cent of the permanent employees are middle aged. Among the permanent employees, the length of employment ranges from two to eight years.

WOMEN IN THE DISTRIBUTION/MARKETING ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL FISHERY

The general manager of the industrial fishery has aptly described the women's role in distributing and marketing as the "field salesmen" on whom the company relies. 5/ However, at the start of the study there were no figures available to document their numbers.

Indeed, as is shown later, although the women engaged in this aspect of the operations are as critical to the success of the MFC as those in the shrimp area are to the Shrimp Export Company, there is readily available evidence to document their employment or earnings. Those women involved in the production and processing aspects can be readily identified as part of a "formal" organized modern industrial fishery establishment, actively participating in the modern wage sector. On the other hand, those who participate in the distribution and marketing aspects, while forming an important part of the distribution channel through which the fish reaches the consumers, would not be accounted for in statistics on employment of the industrial fishery. They operate in what has been termed the urban "informal" sector of the economy, as

"self-employed" traders. Yet, they are, as will be shown, the life-blood on whom a flourishing modern industrial fishery depends.

These women form a link between two sectors, the "formal" modern wage sector establishment, and an "informal" unorganized urban sector economic activity that would appear unrelated. The rest of the paper attempts to document and shed light on this aspect of women's involvement in industrial fishing through the development of quantitative indices or measures of their importance, based on data generated and developed in the course of research on the subject.

FOOTNOTES

- 1. The estimated share of manufacturing in Liberia's GDP has been increased from the 5 per cent level used in the first National Soci-Economic Plan, which level reflected the 1972-1975 period. See National Accounts Division, Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs (1978).
- 2. This section extracts from interviews held at the Mesurado Shrimp Export Co. with the manager of the processing plant in June 1978, as well as other personnel of the plant during the course of the research.
- 3. Approximately 50-60 tons of shrimp a month are exported, with the United States, Britain, and Japan accounting for 70-75 per cent of this.
- 4. See footnote 2, supra.
- 5. Interview held with Mesurado Fishing Company General Manager Mr. Richard Tolbert, May 1978, during pre-feasibility stage of study.

CHAPTER IV transia departmental meneral filos de la compagnió de la company de la c

BACKGROUND TO MEASURING THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN FISH MARKETING

INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the operation of the marketing system, an understanding which is critical to an appreciation of the mesurements later developed. The context in which marketing occurs is described, followed by a description of the individual fish distribution centres (depots), and the system of trade and records.

CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH MARKETING OCCURS

The "Depot" Concept

Liberia's industrial fishery markets its fish almost entirely (with the exception of a small housewives shop in Monrovia) through fish distribution centres termed "depots". These centres, managed by Lebanese agents under contract to the industrial fishery company, total fourteen throughout the country and have cold storage capacity for fish ranging from 10 to 40 tons. These depots are of critical importance to the entire marketing process since they function primarily as the means through which the Company's fish reaches the consumers. Moreover, because of their location throughout the country, the Company has been successful in expanding the orbit of its customers.

Of the fourteen depots, six were chosen as the focus of our study, based on their tonnage capacity and their consequent contribution to the Company's sales. Although these six depots are less than half the total number of depots, they account for more than half of the total industrial fishery's sales in terms of tonnage. The six depots chosen have tonnage capacities totalling 175 tons, accounting for almost 60 per cent of the Company's storage. Both coastal towns and inland towns depots are represented, the significance of which will be apparent later.

The depots became the main reference point for the study and the principal source for development of the data to measure the importance of the women to the industry. This was so because, although technically the agents are the "salesmen" for the fish, the mammies are effectively the depots' "real salesmen"! The agents at the depots keep records of the mammies' sales. These records are paramount to the operations of the depot because of the system of trade operating between the agents and the mammies.

A decision on how best to use the records had to be made. At first, efforts were made to compile records on the mammies at each depot on a monthly basis so as to obtain measures of their performance over a number of years. Unfortunately, this had to be abandoned, though not before considerable time had been spent on the exercise at the two Monrovia depots where there were relatively more records available than at the other depots. It was finally decided to use the depot sales for two different periods in a year for two years' period in order to identify the contribution of

the women as a percent of depot sales and depot sales as a percent of Company sales. The result of this approach would be the development of measures of the contribution of the women to the Company sales and hence to industrial fishing in Liberia.

The Fishing Seasons

Choice of the two time periods was made on the basis of the two different seasons that characterises the tropical West African region - the dry season and the rainy season - and which, in turn, has important implications for the fishing industry in Liberia.

The dry season, December through April, is actually the low season in terms of fish sales for the industrial fishing. This period, on the other hand, is the better season, (the high season) for the artisanal fisheries. The rainy season, May through November, is in turn the high season for the industrial fishery and the low season for the artisanal fisheries.

During the period from December to April, shallow parts of the coastal belt within the tropical region of West Africa are calm and serve as favourable breeding grounds for fish. The fish migrate from the deeper parts of the sea to this region. Then many different types of fish can easily be trapped by the artisanal fishermen who usually fish within this radius. They have heavy catches of fish during this period, their high season. During this same period, ocean going fish vessels make light catches as most of the fish have migrated to the shallow areas where they do not sail. Catches being light, this is considered the low season for the industrial fishing.

The rainy season, May to November, is the period in which the shallow parts of the coastal belt are unfavourable, and fish migrate to the deeper parts of the sea which becomes a favourable breeding ground for them. The roughness of the sea at this time of the year prevents the artisanal fishermen from going to sea, and their catches are always light at this time. Conversely, this is the heavy season for ocean-going vessels.

Given the significance of the seasons for fish catches and fish sales, purposive sampling was adopted in selection of the months for which data would be developed. One month from the middle of each of the two seasons was identified for focus. February and September depot sales were extracted for the period 1976-1978 in those cases where the data permitted in order (a) to portray the effects the seasons have on the artisanal and industrial fisheries and (b) to explain the "ups" and "downs" in the (1) sales of the mammies in relation to the sales of the depots and (2) the sales of the depots in relation to the industrial fishery company sales.

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOTS AND THEIR SYSTEM OF TRADE AND RECORDS

Description of Depots

The Bushrod Island and Camp Johnson Road depots are the two oldest and largest depots in terms of cold storage capacity. Both are located in the capital, Monrovia, situated on the coast, where competition from the artisanal fisheries is most keenly felt. Bushrod Island Depot, the oldest of the two depots, has a volume capacity of forty tons and accounts for approximately twenty-three per cent of the Company's sales. It is also the most outstanding of the depots in terms of the performance of its mammies. There are nine principal fishmammies called "headmammies" with their "submammies" at this depot. Next in order of importance is the Camp Johnson Road Depot with a volume capacity of thirty-five tons, accounting for about nineteen percent of Company sales. It has fifteen headmammies with their various sub-mammies.

Kakata Depot, an inland depot, located forty-three miles from the capital, has a storage capacity of twenty tons and accounts for eleven percent of Company sales. Here there are two different groups of headmammies of thirty each. The Nimba and Gbarnga Depots are two other further inland depots. At Nimba which has a capacity of thirty tons and accounts for about four per cent of company sales, the headmammies are divided into two groups and total about eight. Gbarnga Depot has a storage volume capacity of ten tons and accounts for six percent of company sales. In Gbarnga the headmammies total thirty.

The last of the depots in the study, Buchanan, is a coastal one, situated in Grand Bassa County. It has a storage volume capacity of forty tons and accounts for about six per cent of company sales. This depot is of particular interest to the study because of its location and the context in which it operates. Situated on the coast, it is located almost directly next to a large artisanal fishery site and, as such, feels directly the impact of the performance of that segment of the industry in its operations. The agent has eight fishmammies whom he considers his regular customers, though there are many others who take fish from him.

System of Trade and Records by Depot

Basic to an appreciation of the trading system is an understanding of the nature of the contract existing between the agent operating the depot and the industrial fisheries' company. Chapter III showed that in the period 1963-1964 when the industrial fishery complex expanded 1/ outside the Monrovia area, it used the Lebanese as its wholesalers agents.

According to the agents' contract, the industrial fishery has the responsibility for installing cold storage and for the maintenance of the depot's facilities. The agent in turn has to open a surety with the bank and, on the basis of the cold storage capacity, an agent is obligated to receive a certain tonnage of fish monthly. Each agent has a monthly target of fish sales to meet.







At Camp Johnson Road Depot, (above left)
research team discusses record-keeping
with the agent; (lower left) mammies
receive cartons of fish and (above) fish
are delivered to the depot in refrigerated
vans.

On receiving a particular consignment of fish from the Company, the agent forwards a postdated check for the total value of the fish. He in turn receives a commission for selling the fish. This commission is determined after identifying the agents' operational costs and ranges from \$50 - \$75 per ton based on the depot's budget. These costs includes expenses on the agents' pick-up truck, utility bills and employees' salaries (drivers and cold storage room attendants) plus a certain percentage when an agent exceeds his target. The mammies are not considered in the agents' operational costs; indeed the agents' contract makes no mention of them. As far as the industrial fishery is concerned, it is the responsibility of the agent to ensure that the fish are placed on the market.

The only way in which the fish reach the market is through the operation of a "short credit" system, whereby mammies take large consignments of fish daily on credit and pay the agent the value of the fish after the sale.

As originally developed, the system should yield a commission for the services rendered by the manmies. The reality is otherwise in the majority of the cases, as is illustrated later. This credit system operates with certain variations at each of the depots.

At the Bushrod Island Depot the headmanmies take consignments of fish daily; at the time the fish is being supplied, the agent records the number of cartons of fish, the different types, weights and value on dated pieces of paper called "tickets". The ticket indicates the sale of cartons to a headmammy for that day, and both the agent and mammy keep a copy of the ticket. At the end of the sales period for the day, the agent then transfers the information from the tickets into the individual headmanmy's record book which he keeps. There is a second book in which the agent records sales' figures of all the headmammies. From this is calculated the amount of commission to which each headmanmy is entitled at the end of the month. Payment for the consignment of fish is not made the next day, but rather, after two consecutive days' consignment has been supplied to the headmammy. Hence the system of trade in operation at the Bushrod Island Depot is described as "two-holdings and one-payment", i.e. a marmy may take fish for two consecutive days but on the third day, she must make one payment to take care of her first consignment of fish, whereupon she can then take another consignment (holding). This system encourages the mammies to take large consignments and, indeed, the average daily sales of Bushrod Island mammies vary between eight and one hundred and fifty cartons, as shown in Chapter V.

In selling such large consignments, the headmarmies utilize yet another group of women called sub-mammies. These are women who work for headmarmies who have record books with the agents. They are also termed "customers" of the headmammies, and are generally women new to the fish trade who would not be able to obtain fish on their own account. Hence, the headmammies and sub-mammies together constitute the group fishmammies. Over time some of these sub-mammies may also become headmammies. The number of sub-mammies per headmarmy at this Depot varies between five to fifteen.

Such large numbers raise questions as to whether there is an excessive number of people involved in the fish trade at any one depot. However, the fishmammies showing keen business sense do not all sell every day. Almost half of the headmammies at the Bushrod Island Depot do not themselves go to the market to sell but rather distribute their consignments to their submammies (customers) who do the actual selling. While these headmammies request fish daily, all their sub-mammies do not sell daily. They divide up the days that their sub-mammies will sell so that, for example, those who sell on Mondays will sell again on Wednesdays and Fridays. Those headmammies who sell directly tend to sell one, two or three times a week, with their submammies who also divide up the selling days. Thus the possibility of losses resulting from too many sellers in the market necessitating lowering of the price of the fish is reduced.

At Bushrod Island, half of the headmannies take daily consignments. One-quarter of the headmannies and their submannies sell once in a week, whilst one-eighth of the headmannies sell twice a week. There are some cases where the submannies sell throughout the week. There are also instances when a particular sub-manny may sell for a headmannie other than her own when hers does not request fish on a particular day.

At the Camp Johnson Road Depot the credit system operates quite differently from that described above. Here, the system of trade is "one holding, one payment". The headmammies are supplied with their daily consignment request and pay the agent the next day either in the morning or when they request another consignment, generally at night when they have finished their daily sales. Here some headmammies sell every day, some four times a week and the rest twice a week. A distinguishing characteristics between the two Monrovia depots is that at the Bushrod Island Depot, the headmammies generally do not sell directly to customers while at the Camp Johnson Road Depot all the headmammies with their sub-mammies sell at the market directly to customers. It is worth nothing that the number of times a headmammy sells in a week enables her to exercise a measure of control over the supply of fish in the market.

The agent has only one record book for each headmammy in which he records the daily consignment requests of headmammies. At the close of the day or in the morning, as headmammies pay for their previous consignment, the agent takes the headmammy book and "ticks" each fish type as the headmammy pays for each carton. This process continues until a headmammy finishes paying for all her previous consignments. At Camp Johnson Road a submammy may go the agent during the absence of the headmammy and request as much as she may need from the agent on behalf of her headmammy. From the record sales book, the agent calculates for each headmammy at the end of the month the commission to which she is entitled. At neither depot are headmammies able to give the monetary value of a day's consignment request verbally. Headmammies count their money after a day's sales by the type of fish they were supplied with at the depots.

At Kakata Depot, the system of sales is "one holding, one payment". All the women in the fish trade here tend to be headmarmies. Headmammies pay for their daily consignment request of cartons of fish on the next day when they go to make another request. Headmanmies here are divided into two groups of thirty each. The two groups sell on alternate days, but on Friday both groups sell. Headmanmies sell only smoked fish on Fridays. Despite the fact that all the women are headmarmies, their children or relatives help them sell at the market at times when a headmarmy cannot be there or sell side by side with the headmanmy. The agent has two record books, one for each group of headmanmies. The agent records daily a headmarmy's consignment request for cartons of fish of different types and prices.

The Nimba Depot system of sales is "two holdings, one payment", as at the Bushrod Island Depot. The agent has a record book for each headmanny in which he records their daily consignment request for cartons of fish of different types and prices. At the end of a month, he calculates a headmanny's commission from the daily records. Headmannies here are divided into several groups which sell alternately. At this Depot each headmanny and her sub-mannies are allowed four selling days. The headmanny sells for two consecutive days after which her sub-mannies sell for another two consecutive days. Then, another headmanny and her group of sub-mannies sell for four days, following the same pattern until all the headmannies have had their turn. In Nimba also, the sub-mannies are able to make requisitions from the Agent on behalf of their headmannies during their absence.

Gbarnga Depot exhibits slightly different characteristics from the other depots; here there is a greater tendency for the women to buy their cartons of fish with ready cash. The mammies at this depot tend to request relatively smaller consignments of fish, one or two cartons at a time at most, returning for an additional carton only upon completion of a sale. The agent records the fish mammies' daily sales in one book.

The system in operation at the Buchanan Depot is "one holding, one payment", as at the Camp Johnson Road Depot. The agent keeps records on a "ticket" basis. He records the individual headmanmy's daily consignment requests on separate pieces of paper which he and the headmanmies call their "ticket".

The only depot without any credit system was the West Point Depot, located in the heart of downtown Monrovia's general market. There anyone (fishmarmy or not) can walk in, pay cash, and receive the requested number of cartons of fish.

FOOTNOTE

1. It was pointed out that since the Lebanese traders were spread throughout the country, in the Liberian environment they were the obvious candidates through whom such expansion could take place. Indeed the fact that more than 90 per cent of the Company's agents have businesses (commercial trading establishments) other than their fishing agency means that there exists the means for buttressing oscilliations in their income as agents.

CHAPTER V "MEASURES" OR "INDICATORS" OF IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRIAL FISHERY

INTRODUCTION

Chapter V and VI constitute the core of this study. Here the qualitative documentation of the role of women in the industrial fishery is quantified and "measures" or "indicators" developed. To arrive at these neasures required considerable amount of time consuming work, given the form of the mammies sales records at the depots.

Since the depots were the source of data on the women's sales, it was necessary to concentrate at the Depot level to develop the "hard" quantitative data needed for the study. This was a tremendous task since, as explained earlier, the records were kept on a daily basis. Illustrations of the form of these records are shown in Annex II. Because of the differences in the fishing seasons and the implications of this for the mammies' productivity, it was necessary to develop two sets of data. Finally, since our interest was in a comparative analysis of the performance of the mammies over time and their contribution to industry's sales, efforts were made to generate data for a three-year period, 1976 to 1978, in those instances where the raw data was available for each depot.

The chapter describes the methodology used in the development of these measures and then proceeds to analysis of the data, presenting quantitative data on the mammies' performance by depots, comparison of growth of the mammies' sale with that of the depot sales and the industrial fishery. This is then followed by a commentary evaluating the sales performances as a whole.

METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN DEVELOPMENT OF MEASURES

As the various depots used different methods to maintain their sales records for the fishmammies, formats had to be designed to facilitate data extraction. Since sales records were recorded in terms of the number of 20 kilo and 30 kilo cartons of fish "taken" by the mammies, these recorded sales had to be converted into tonnage to correspond with the records in tonnage maintained by the industrial fishery. (A more detailed explanation of how this conversion was done can be found in the technical note in Annex III).

DATA ANALYSIS

The original plan was to utilize the records of the various months for the years chosen and thus develop the necessary measures. However not all the depots had the relevant data for every month of the period selected. Thus, a decision was made to focus on one month each from the two main seasons for the period 1976 - 1978 in order to assess changes in the marries' performance and the overall performance of the industrial fishery. February and September were selected for reasons explained in Chapter IV.

The data developed are contained in Tables 1 - 7.

Marmies' Performance by Depots

Bushrod Island Depot

Tables 1 - 7 show the sales of the fishmammies of the various depots for the months of February and September 1976 - 1978.

In the Bushrod Island and Camp Johnson Road Depot cases, the sales are presented for the entire group of fishmammies. Efforts at a finer breakdown for the out-of-Monrovia area depots was neither feasible nor warranted given the comparatively smaller quantity of fish involved.

The tables also relate the mammies' sales to the individual depot sales and to the Company sales, thereby developing the necessary measure of the contribution of the women to the industrial fishery. February, it should be recalled, is a low season month for the industrial fishery when overall sales performance is not as high as during the high-season month of September.

TABLE 1

SALES OF FISHMAMMIES OF BUSHROD ISLAND DEPOT (FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER 1976)

FEBR	UARY		SEPT	EMBER -
	G! 30 KG!TOTAL ! N!CARTON!CARTON!		KG! 30 KG! TOTAL ON!CARTON!CARTON	! TON ! % a/b !
(A) ! 215 (B) ! 133 (C) ! 83 (D) ! 1424 (E) ! 54 (F) ! 218 (G) ! 234 (H) ! 876 (I) ! 13	! 77 ! 230 ! ! 416 ! 1249 ! ! 712 ! 2136 ! ! 27 ! 81 ! ! 144 ! 432 ! ! 539 ! 833 ! ! 453 ! 1329 !	29.14!16.92 ! !1821 49.84!28.93 ! !3091	! 237 ! 948 ! 152 ! 608 ! 607 ! 2428 !1030 ! 4121 ! 74 ! 295 ! 167 ! 668 ! 478 ! 1911 ! 607 ! 2427 ! 121 ! 485	! 21.34 ! 6.69 ! ! 13.68 ! 4.29 ! ! 54.63 ! 17.13 ! ! 92.74 ! 29.08 ! ! 6.63 ! 2.08 ! ! 15.02 ! 4.71 ! ! 42.99 ! 13.48 ! ! 54.60 ! 17.12 ! ! 10.91 ! 3.42 !
TOTAL : 4270	! 2712 ! 6992 !	162.37!94.25 ! 10418	!3473 ! 1389	!312.54 ! 98 !
	b) 172.258 c) 831.066 20.73	M	EPOT SALES (b) ESU SALES (c) b/c	318.940 1055.603 30.21

TABLE 2

SALES OF FISHMAMMIES OF BUSHROD ISLAND DEPOT (FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER 1977)

	FEBRUARY		SEPTEMBER
FISH(a	.)! 20 KG! 30 KG! TOTAL S:CARTON!CARTON!CARTO		! 20 KG! 30 KG! TOTAL ! TON ! % a/b ! !CARTON!CARTON!CARTON!
(A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F) (G) (H) (I)	! 150 ! 75 ! 225 ! 328 ! 109 ! 437 ! 512 ! 167 ! 669 ! 1105 ! 368 ! 1473 ! 191 ! 96 ! 287 ! 257 ! 84 ! 335 ! 1025 ! 342 ! 1367 ! 972 ! 311 ! 1243 ! 406 ! 135 ! 541	! 9.84! 6.54 ! 15.05! 10.00 ! 33.16! 22.03 ! 6.69! 4.45 ! 7.53! 5.00 ! 30.76! 20.44 ! 27.96! 18.58 !	! 1330 ! 443 ! 1773 ! 39.89! 16.72! ! 2199 ! 733 ! 2932 ! 65.98! 27.65! ! 273 ! 91 ! 364 ! 8.18! 3.43! ! 418 ! 139 ! 557 ! 12.55! 5.26! ! 1138 ! 379 ! 1517 ! 34.14! 14.31!
	! 4890 ! 1687 ! 6577 SALES (b) 150.500 SALES (c) 717.892 20.96	! 148.41! 98.62 !	!10726 ! 2544 !13270 ! 229.07! 96.00! DEPOT SALES (b) 238.616 MESU SALES (c) 928.252 % b/c 25.71

TABLE 3

SALES OF FISHMAMMIES OF BUSHROD ISLAND DEPOT (FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER 1978)

	FEBRU	ARY	Z .									SEPTI	EM	BER			
FISH(a): MAMMIES:				TOTAL CARTON	!	TON !	% a/b !! !!	20 KC						TON	!	% b/c	1
(A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F) (G) (H) (I)	731 138 283 1505 530 142 682 524 27	!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	365 69 94 752 265 47 341 262 13	207 377 2257 795 189 1023 786	** ** ** ** **	4.80! 8.49! 52.64! 18.55! 4.25! 23.86!	15.05!! 2.84!! 5.00!! 30.99!! 10.92!! 2.50!! 14.05!! 10.80!! 0.63!!	272 110 2821 1063 62 1419 1014	** ** ** ** ** **	354 21 473	** ** ** ** ** ** **	414 147 3761 1417 83	** ** ** ** **	43.38 9.69 3.31 84.62 31.90 1.86 42.56 30.41 1.86	** ** ** ** ** **	16.78 3.75 1.28 32.73 12.34 0.72 16.46 11.76 0.72	!
DEPOT SA	4562 ALES (b))	10	9.874 11.815	1	157.56!	92.78!!	DEPO	OT J S	2808 SALES	3	1107 (b) (c)		249.59 258.546 188.999 21.74	:	96.54	1

TABLE 4

SALES OF FISHMAMMIES OF CAMP JOHNSON ROAD DEPOT (FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER 1977)

			FEF	RUARY	7								SEI	PTI	EMBER				
FISH(a	.)!	20 K	G!	30 KG	; ;	TOTA	L!	TON !	% a/b	!!	20 KG	3!	30 K	3!!	TATO	†	TON !	% a/b	_:
MAMMIE	s!	CARTO	N:C	ARTO	1!0	CARTON	!	4 !		!!!	CARTO	1!	CARTO	1!(CARTON	1	1		_!
(A)	1	198	1	92	1	290	1	6.72!	7.63	11	385	!	180	!	565	1	13.10!	7.82	!
(B)	1	259		86	1	345	1	7.76!	8.82		544		181	!	725	!	16.30!	9.74	1
(c)		236		143	!	379	1	10 12/10 10 112			461		181	!	743	9	17.68!		1
(D)	1	192		188	!	380		9.48!	10.77	!!	373	!	372	ì	745	1	18.62!	11.11	1
(E)	1	193	1	115	1	308		7.31!	8.30	11	375	!	226	ţ.	601	1	14.28!	8.52	1
(F)	!	233	!	126	1	359	!	8.44!	9.59	11	455	!	248	!	703	1	16.54!	9.87	!
(G)	9	243	1	81	1	324		7.29!	8.28	11	667	!	222	!	889	1	20.00!	11.94	
(H)	1	185	,	85	!	270	,	6.25!	7.09	!!	359	!	166	!	525	•	12.16!	7.26	1
TOTAL	1	1739	1	916	!	2655	!	62.26!	70.73	!!	3592	!	1877	!	5496	!	128.69!	76.82	:
		-	b)	88.	1000)	DEPOT	S	ALES (ъ)			.530		
	SAI	LES (2)	717							MESU S	SA	LES (c			.252		
% b/c				12.	.26)				,	% b/c					LØ	.05		

TABLE 5

SALES OF FISHMAMMIES OF CAMP JOHNSON ROAD DEPOT (FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER 1978)

	FEE	BRUARY				الندارة				SE	PT.	EMBER					
FISH(a)! 2 MAMMIES!CA	20 KG! ARTON!C				TON !	% a/b				-	G! N!	TOTAL	*	TON	!	% a/b	!
(A) ! (B) ! (C) ! (D) ! (E) ! (F) ! (G) !	273 ! 274 ! 353 ! 461 ! 265 ! 212 ! 313 ! 243 !	153 208 471 219 200 149 158 103		** ** ** ** ** **	10.05! 11.72! 21.19! 15.79! 11.30! 8.71! 11.00! 7.95!	7.56 8.82 15.94 11.88 8.49 6.55 8.27 5.98		378 486 644 576 468 362 772 388	*******	199 395 921 573 381 277 367 139	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	577 881 1565 1149 849 639 1139 527	** ** ** ** ** **	13.53 21.51 40.51 28.71 20.79 15.55 26.45 11.95	***	6.11 9.74 18.29 12.96 9.39 7.02 11.94 5.39	***************************************
DEPOT SALE MESU SALE % b/c		13	! 4055 32.947 11.815 18.68	!	97.71!	73.49	D:	EPOT S	!3 SAL	ES (! b)	7326 221 1188	L.1	991	!	80.84	

TABLE 6

SALES OF FISHMAMMIES OF KAKATA, BUCHANAN, GBARNGA AND NIMBA DEPOTS (FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER 1976-77)

5_			19			FEBRU	\R	Y	
	!KAKATA !	20 K	G!	30 KG	!	TOTAL	1	TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b) ! MESU SALES (c)
	!DEPOT !	CTN.	. !	CTN.	!	CTN.	!	TON.	176.00 TON % a/b 1836.066 TON
	!FISH ! !MMES (a)!	501	_!	1148	!	1649	!	44.60	: 58.68 : % b/c 9.14
7									
	! !KAKATA !	20 K	G!	30 KG	1	TOTAL	!	TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b) ! MESU SALES (c)
	!DEPOT !	CTN.	!	CTN.	!	CTN.	:	TON	!103.910 TON % a/b 717.892 TON
	!FISH ! !MMES (a)!	1079		1439	!	2518	!	64.74	62.30 % b/c 14.47
	BCHNAN !	20 K	G!	130 KG	!	TOTAL	1	TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b) ! MESU SALES (c)
	!DEPOT !	CTN.	!	CTN.		CTN.	?	TON.	!24.530TON % a/b ! 717.892 TON
	!FISH ! !MMES (a)!	349	:	466	4	815	!	20.96	85.45 % b/c 3.42
				. 1					
	! GBNGA !	20 K	G!	30 KG	!	TOTAL	!	TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b) ! MESU SALES (c)
	!!	CTN.	!	CTN.	:	CTN.	9	TON.	!73.110TON % a/b ! 717.892 TON
	!FISH ! !MMES (a)!	872	:	1163	!	2035	!	5232	85.24 % b/c 10.18
	!NIMBA !	20 K	G !	30 KG	!	TOTAL		TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b) ! MESU SALES (c)
	!DEPOT !	CTN.	!	CTN.	!	CTN.	1	TON.	135.060TON % a/b ! 717.892 TON
	!FISH ! !MMES (a)!	440	!	587	!	1027	!	26.42	75.35 % b/c 4.88

CTN = CARTON

BCHNAN = BUCHANAN GBNGA = GBARNGA MMES = MAMMIES

TABLE 6 (Cont'd)

1976		SEPTEMBER	
	KG ! 30 KG	! TOTAL ! TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)!
!DEPOT ! CT	N. ! CTN.	! CTN. ! TON. !132.110 TON % a/b	! 1055.603 TON !
MMES (a)	+7 2062	3609 92.81 70.25	% b/c 12.52
1977!			
! KAKATA ! 20	Kg ! 30 KG	! TOTAL ! TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)!
! DEPOT ! CT	N. ! CTN.	! CTN. ! TON. !112.710 TON % a/b	! 928.252 TON. !
!FISH ! 130	1818	3182 81.83 72.60	% b/c 12.14
BCHNAN ! 20	KG ! 30 KG	! TOTAL ! TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)!
!DEPOT ! CT	N. ! CTN.	! CTN. ! TON !73.480 TON % a/b	! 928. 252 TON. !
!FISH !MMES (a)! 100	58 1424	2492 64.07 87.20	% b/c 7.92
	- 1 H 1		
	KG ! 30 KG	! TOTAL ! TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)!
!DEPOT ! CTI	. ! CTN.	! CTN. ! TON !35.080 TON % a/b	! 928.252 TON. !
!FISH ! !MMES (a)!	08 677	1185 30.48. 86.88	% b/c 3.78
!NIMBA ! 20	KG ! 30 KG	! TOTAL ! TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)!
!DEPOT ! CTI	. ! CTN.	! CTN. ! TON. !22.050 TON % a/b	! 928.252 TON. !
!FISH ! 28	34 : 379	663 17.04 77.29	% b/c 2.38

3. Kakata, Buchanan, Gbarnga and Nimba Depots

Tables 6 and 7 summarise the mammies' performance at the depots outside Monrovia, i.e. the Kakata, Buchanan, Gbarnga and Yekepa-Nimba Depots for relevant months in 1976 - 1978 in the Kakata case, and for the years 1977 and 1978 in the other cases.

For Kakata, in February 1976 - 1978 the mammies sold 44.60, 64.70 and 46.193 tons of depot sales in each of the respective years. These represented 58 per cent, 62.3 per cent and 64.4 per cent of depot sales for the years 1976 - 78. As a proportion of Company sales, the Kakata Depot accounted for 9.1, 14.5 and 10 per cent in February of each of the respective years.

At the other depots, the February situation was as follows: Buchanan marmies sold 20.96 tons (85.5 per cent) and 29.36 tons (87.5 per cent) of depot sales in 1977 and 1978 respectively. In each case the proportion of Company sales was 3.4 per cent and 4.7 per cent respectively. At Gbarnga, the mammies sold 52.32 tons (or 85.2 per cent) and 42.55 tons (86.3 per cent) of depots sales in 1977 and 1978 respectively. As a proportion of Company sales, these represented 10 per cent in 1977 and 7.0 per cent in 1978. At Nimba, the mammies sold 26.42 tons (75 per cent) and 27.3 per cent tons (76.6 per cent) of depot sales in 1977 and 1978. This represented 4.9 per cent and 5.0 per cent of Company sales in 1977 and 1978 respectively.

As at the Monrovia Depots, the mammies' September sales were considerably different from those of February for the relevant years. In the case of Kakata, the mammies accounted for 58.7 per cent, 62.3 per cent and 64.4 per cent of February depot sales, while in September the mammies accounted for 70 per cent, 72.6 per cent and 75.6 per cent of depot sales for 1976-78, respectively. At the other depots, the proportion of sales the mammies accounted for was similarly higher in Septembers.

Summary

The data show the degree to which depot sales depend on the fishmammies. The statement that the mammies are the actual backbone of the depot sales can now be made with quantitative data to substantiate it. Figure 2, sales of the Depots of the Industrial Fishery for the Months of February and September 1978, summarises the argument. The figure shows total sales (the entire bar graph) by depot for the relevant months and the proportion (shaded portion of bar graph) sold by the mammies.

1. Bushrod Island Depot

Tables 1-3 summarize the performance of nine fish mammies at the Bushrod Island Depot for the relevant months of 1976-78. In February 1976, 1977 and 1978, the nine mammies sold 162.37, 148.41 and 157.56 tons for each of these years respectively. These figures represented 94.3 per cent, 98.6 per cent and 92.8 per cent of depot sales for each of the respective years. The sales of the nine mammies ranged from 1.89 tons to 49.84 tons (or 1.1 per cent to 28.9 per cent of depot sales) in 1976, from 5.23 to 33.16 tons (or 3.5 per cent to 22.0 per cent depot sales) in 1977 and from 1.07 to 52.64 tons (or 0.6 per cent to 31 per cent of depot sales) in 1978. The proportion of Company sales accounted for by the Bushrod Island Depot for the same years was 20.7 per cent, 21.0 per cent and 23.9 per cent, respectively.

For September 1976, 1977 and 1978, both the absolute amount of the mammies' sales and their sales' as a proportion of depot sales experienced considerable improvement over the February situations. Thus, in September the same mammies sold 312.54, 229.07 and 249.59 tons for the years 1976, 1977 and 1978, respectively. These in turn represented 98 per cent, 96 per cent and 96.5 per cent of depot sales in each of the respective years. The ranges of sales were from 6.63 to 92.74 tons (or 2.11 per cent to 29.1 per cent of depot sales) from 8.18 to 65.98 tons (or 3.9 per cent 27.7 per cent of depot sales) and from 1.86 to 84.62 tons (or 0.7 per cent to 32.7 per cent of depot sales) for each of the years respectively. As a proportion of the Company's total sales in each of these respective years, the depot sales accounted for 30.2 per cent, 25.7 per cent and 21.7 per cent.

2. Camp Johnson Road Depot

Records available for the Camp Johnson Road Depot permitted analysis for the years 1977 and 1978 only. Tables 4 and 5 summarise the situation at this depot for February and September of each of these years for eight of the major headmammies at the depot. Thus, in February 1977 and 1978, these mammies sold 62.26 tons (or 70.7 per cent) and 97.71 tons (or 73 per cent) of depot sales in each of the respective years 1977 and 1978. The sales of these mammies ranged from 6.25 to 9.48 tons representing ranges of 7.0 per cent to 10 per cent of depot sales and from 7.95 tons to 21.19 tons representing 6.0 per cent to 15.0 per cent respectively for the years 1977 and 1978. In terms of proportion of Company sales the depot accounted for 12.3 per cent in 1977 and 18.7 per cent in 1978.

In September the mammies' sales increased to 128.69 tons (or 76.8 per cent) and 179.04 tons (or 80.8 per cent) of depot sales for the years 1977 and 1978 respectively. The mammies' sales performance in these years ranged from 12.16 tons to 20 tons (7.3 per cent to 11.9 per cent) in 1977 and from 11.93 tons to 40.57 tons (5 per cent to 18 per cent) in 1978. As a proportion of Company sales the depot's share increased to 18.1 per cent in 1977, in comparison to the February situation, but remained at the 18.6 per cent share in September 1978.

TABLE 7 (Cont'd)

		- With UM					SE	PTEMBER	
KAKATA	!	20 KG	!	30 KG	!	TOTAL	!	TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)
DEPOT	:	CARTON	:	CARTON	!	CARTON		TON. 1150.230 TON % a/1	/b !1188.991 TON
FISH MMES (a)	1	1894	!	2525	!	4419	!	113.62 75.63	% b/c 12.64
DOWNAN		00. 150		00 550					
BCHNAN	•	20 KG	-	30 KG	-	TOTAL	:	TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)
DEPOT		CARTON	-:	CARTON	-	CARTON		TON. 197.557 TON % a/b	b !1188.991 TON
FISH MMES (a)	9	1472	:	1963	:	3435		88.33 90.55	% b/c 8.21
GBARNGA	!	20 KG	!	30 KG	!	TOTAL	!	TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)
DEPOT	,	CARTON	!	CARTON	!	CARTON	1	TON. 164.790 TON % a/b	
FISH MMES (a)	!	949	!	1265	!	2214	!!!	56.92 87.86	% b/c 5.45
NIMBA		20 KG	!	30 KG	!	TOTAL	1	TOTAL !DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESURADO SALES (c)!
DEPOT	1	CARTON	!	CARTON	!	CARTON	!	TON. !32.710 TON % a/b	
FISH MMES (a)		435	!	580	!	1015	1	26.11 79.84	% b/c 2.75

TABLE 7

SALES OF FISHMAMMIES OF KAKATA, BUCHANAN, GBARNGA AND NIMBA DEPOTS

(FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER 1978)

1.71			FEB	RUARY		
KAKATA !	20 KG	30 KG !	TOTAL !	TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESU SALES (c)
DEPOT :	CARTON	CARTON :	CARTON !	TON.	!71.685 TON % a/b	! 711.815 TON
FISH ! MMES (a)!	770	1027	1797	46.19	64.44	% b/c 10.07
12k W -17			37.1			
BCHNAN !	20 KG	30 KG !	TOTAL !	TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESU SALES (c)
DEPOT !	CARTON	CARTON :	CARTON !	TON.	133.575 TON % a/b	! 711.815 TON
FISH ! MMES (a)!	489	652	1141	29.36	87.45	% b/c 4.72
GBNGA !	20 KG	30 KG !	TOTAL !	TOTAL	DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESU SALES (c)
DEPOT !	CARTON	CARTON !	CARTON !	TON.	149.25 TON % a/b	: 711.815 TON
FISH ! MMES (a)!	709	945	1654	42.52	86.34	% b/c 7.01
NIMBA !	20 KG	! 30 KG !	TOTAL !	TOTAL	!DEPOT SALES (b)	! MESU SALES (c)
DEPOT !	CARTON	CARTON !	CARTON !	TON.	135.718 TON % a/b	! 711.815
FISH ! MMES (c)!	456	608	1064	27.34	76.56	% b/c 5.02





'At the town of Buchanan: (above) artisanal fishing; (above right) a mammy selling fish in the market; (right) Consultant discusses the problems mammies face at this depot.



Trends in Sales of Fishmammies, Depots and Industrial Fishery

In order to illustrate trends in the nammies' performance relative to overall fishing industry Table 8 summarises the growth in sales over the period, highlighting those cases of increase and decreases in percentages for the relevant months. Growing rates for Bushrod Island and Kakata Depots are based on three years (1976 - 1978) whereas the others are based on only two years' data.

In general when the marmies' sales increase, the percentage increase tends to be higher than that of the depot sales. Conversely, when the marmies sales decline, except in the Bushrod Island Depot case, the percentage decline is generally less than the Depot sales' decline. The percentages show general increases in the marmies' sales in Septembers, and following from this, in September overall percentage increases in Company sales are observed as compared with overall percentage declines in February.

TABLE 8: GROWTH OF SALES OF FISHMAMMIES, DEPOTS AND COMPANY FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER (1976-1978)

	FEBRU	JARY	SEP'	TEMBER
BUSHROD ISLAND DEPOT	INCREASE IN %	DECREASE IN %	INCREASE IN %	DECREASE IN %
FISHMAMMIES SALES DEPOT SALES COMPANY SALES		3.0 1.4 14.0	12.6	20.0 19.0
CAMP JOHNSON DEPOT FISHMAMMIES SALES DEPOT SALES COMPANY SALES	56.9 57.0	0.9	39.1 32.2 28.1	
KAKATA DEPOT FISHMAMMIES SALES DEPOT SALES COMPANY SALES	3.67	5.7 14.4	22.4 13.7 12.6	
BUCHANAN DEPOT FISHMAMMIES SALES DEPOT SALES COMPANY SALES	40.1 36.9	0.9	37.9 32.8 28.1	
GBARNGA DEPOT FISHMAMMIES SALES DEPOT SALES COMPANY SALES		18.7 32.6 0.9	86.8 84.7 28.1	
NIMBA DEPOT FISHMAMMIES SALES DEPOT SALES COMPANY SALES	3.5 1.9	0.9	53.2 48.3 28.1	

SOURCE: Tables 1-7, as developed from depot sales records and industrial fishery company monthly sales report.

The lower percentage increases for Bushrod Island and Kakata Depots as compared to the others is due to the ract that in these two cases the growth is calculated for a three year period as indicated above. Similarly, the higher percentage declines for February for these two Depots can be attributed to the same factor.

The higher rate of growth in the mammies' sales in comparison to the growth of the depot sales is to be expected since it is that growth that makes possible the fact of the mammies' accounting for such a high proportion of depot sales. Similarly, since the mammies' sales are so crucial to total depot sales, declines in the mammies' sales would result in greater declines in the depot sales. Lastly, with the exception of Bushrod Island Depot, the high growth performance in September mammies' sales translates to increases in Company sales that generally occur during September, the mid-point of the high season for the industrial fishery.

CHAPTER VI
OTHER INDIATORS

OF

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

FISH MARKETING

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter provides further insights into the characteristics of the women involved in fish marketing on the basis of information derived from a sample survey of fishmammies. The objective was to supplement the depot and sales records information through empirically-generated data on the condition of the women in the business as well as the development of other measures on the extent of their participation in fish marketing. It was felt that without a field survey, the study would be incomplete. Moreover, a better appreciation of the data presented earlier would be obtained if more insights on what is involved in marketing the fish were obtained from interviews with the mammies. Accordingly, a questionnaire was developed, and mammies engaged in fish marketing in five different parts of Liberia were interviewed. Among the concerns were: who are these women? How did they get started in business? Why do they continue in the business? How much income do they derive from their work? How do they themselves view their role?

BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

Methodology

The methodology adopted in the conduct of the survey involved a two-step process. The first step involved becoming acquainted with the mammies, explaining the project and gaining their confidence for the actual interviews. This was accomplished during the period of assessment of the depots data and during the prefeasibility stage of the project when efforts were being made to obtain the cooperation of the agents and the MFC as well as during the exploratory trips' stage. This stage can be described as the "pre-interview period" when the researcher participated through observation, and became better acquainted with the actual operation of the fish marketing system at the depot site and in the local markets.

The second stage was the conduct of the interviews and administration of the questionnaire, both in the market places and at the depots. The survey was conducted in the month of September and covered mammies engaged in fish marketing in Monrovia, Kakata, Gibi Territory, Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, Yekepa, Nimba County and Gbarnga, Bong County. The interviews were generally conducted on Saturday afternoon, that being the busiest market time in each of these locations when one would expect to find the largest number of fish sellers. In a few cases, however, the interviews were conducted on other days because of certain aspects of the fish marketing system at the particular site to be expanded on later.

Target Group

The target of our interviews were the mammies and especially the headmammies who are the real entrepreneurs in the business. The interviews were also directed at the submammies. The submammies, however, were more reluctant to be interviewed than the headmammies. They tended to be more apprenhensive about the project and generally deferred to one of their respective headmammies. Since the confidence of the headmammies had been gained during the pre-interview stage, the interviews concentrated more on them.

Interviews took place at the depots and at the market sites. As the structure diagram of the fish distribution network showed, there are headmammies who are predominantly wholesalers and headmammies who are both wholesalers and retailers. Those in the former group, largely the Bushrod Island mammies, are generally not found in the local markets except when they go to collect their money from their 'customers' or submammies. Thus they had to be interviewed at the depots. The wholesalers/retailers group were generally interviewed at the marketplaces.

The Interview Process

There were five interviewers in all with a variety of language capability so that communication did not pose any serious problems. All the headmammies, except in Gbarnga, speak English. Gbarnga where many Mandingo trade, and whose language none of the interviewers spoke, was the only instance where translation of the questionnaire was necessary.

Interviewing required time and involved opportunity costs to the mammies since time spent answering questions might otherwise have been spent making sales. The ideal time for conducting the interviews was found to be after three o'clock in the afternoon when the pace of activity in the marketplace had slowed down.

A Perspective on Liberian Market Women

In order to obtain an appreciation of the context within which fishmammies operate, some perspective on market women in Liberia is necessary. The findings of two research projects provide insights on market women in the Monrovia area. One is the Monrovia Labour Force Surveys of January and July 1974, conducted by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs 1/ and the second, is a more recent study by Dr. Kaba of the University of Liberia. 2/

The Monrovia Labour Force Survey of July 1974 found that of a total population (15 years or more) of 120,000 in the Monrovia area, 53,000 were women, 18,000 of whom were in the labour force - a labour force participation rate of 33.1%. Of these 12,000, or some two-thirds, were employed. The survey found that sales workers were the largest occupational category accounting for 25 per cent of the total employment (both male and female)

in Monrovia. Within that category "making-market" accounted for 15 per cent or 8,000 of the total. Among these 8,000 women predominated. Eighty-five per cent of those "making-market" were women. Of this group, 84 per cent earned less than \$80 a month. 3/ Seventy-four per cent of men "making-market" earned less than \$80 a month, while more than half of all workers were found to earn less than \$80 a month.

Dr. Kaba's study was concerned with the relationship between women's economic activities and family behaviour and expectations in Liberia. Using random sampling procedure, Dr. Kaba selected 109 market women from three major market places in Monrovia to interview in order to contrast their situation to that of office women in Monrovia. His subsample of market women represented less than two per cent of the city's estimated 6,000 market women. 4/

The study revealed that in the Monrovia area the great majority of market women are married, eighty per cent have no formal schooling or training and only 19 per cent had some elementary education. It noted that Liberian market women by and large learn their trade on the job in routine fashion.

The research paper, "Marketing in Gbarnga", 5/ provides research findings on market women outside the Monrovia area. The study revealed that the market women of Gbarnga are primarily Kpelle (52 per cent) and Mandingo (25 per cent), that women's attendance at the market is extensive, with 70 per cent of them "doing market six or seven days a week and that nearly three-quarters of the women spend about 10-12 hours a day at the market. Another study on the Gbarnga market place describes specialization in the Gbarnga market with certain groups of women selling only one or two items, this being particularly the case among fish sellers and rice sellers. The relatively few sellers of fish thereby assume an oligopolistic role in the market. 6/

SURVEY OF THE FISHMAMMIES

The Context

A "head count" of sellers of fish (frozen fresh and dried) at four major markets in the Monrovia area on one Saturday in 1978 revealed a total of some 211 fish sellers. 7/ This represents approximately 3.5 per cent of the estimated 6,000 market women referred to earlier. Of the 211 fish sellers, about 57 per cent (120) were selling frozen fish (i.e., fish from the industrial fishery) and 13 per cent (27) selling fish from the artisanal fisheries. A week later a similar head count in the same four markets revealed a total of approximately 190 sellers of fish with approximately 54 per cent (102) selling frozen fish. Head counts on two subsequent weeks showed that the number of fish sellers rarely remained the same, there was considerable variation among the different markets, and also from day to day. The West Point General Market tended to have the greatest number of fish sellers an average 30 per cent, followed by the Rally Time Market (27 per cent), with Doula Market and Logan Town Market at about 21 per cent each.

Since about 200 fish sellers were counted at the four major markets alone, this could be used as a minimum figure for the number of fish sellers to be found in Monrovia's markets on any Saturday during the rainy season (or throughout the year with the exception of the artisanal fisheries' high season). Considering all the markets in the city, 300-350 fish sellers would be a more likely working average. Thus sellers of fish (almost entirely women) would constitute between 3.5 and 5.8 per cent of the estimated 6000 market women in Monrovia. From this percentage, at least half would be sellers of fish for the industrial fishery.

The range in the estimated number of fish sellers is due to several factors. One, all fish sellers do not sell fish at the same time; They divide up their selling days, such that although fish sellers tend to specialize in their trade (i.e., they sell only fish and no other items), the same seller does not sell everyday. Moreover, the availability of what the fish sellers call "good fish" (i.e. fast-selling fish) has a considerable effect on the number of fish sellers selling at any point in time. Thus, the more "good fish" there are, the greater the number of cartons the mammies will request and in turn, the more submammies there will be selling. The quantity of fish available from the artisanal fisheries will effect the number and proportion of fish sellers in the market and also the share of frozen fish sellers to all fish sellers on any particular day in the market.

In the dry season, when conditions are most favourable for the artisanal fishermen, the number of fish sellers can be expected to be higher than the 300 - 350 estimate. An estimated 400 sellers of fish might be in the maxin the Monrovia area at this time. During this period, the proportion of fish sellers who sell frozen fish would very likely be reduced to somewhere about 40-45 per cent from the more than 50 per cent during the rainy season.

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire of twenty items was used to interview the mammies. The questionnaire was aimed at obtaining information on a number of variables related to the women involved in the trade. The major areas of information sought were (1) socio-demographic, (2) measures of the extent of the women's participation in fish marketing, (3) economic returns from selling fish and benefits derived, and (4) reasons for selling fish and evaluation of fish marketing business.

Since the interviews were conducted successively in Monrovia, followed by Kakata, Buchanan, Nimba and ending with Gbarnga, the questionnaire benefitted from experiences gained during the earlier interviewing and was constantly adapted to make it a better instrument. For example, after a first attempt to find out how many hours were spent daily in fish marketing met with difficulties in some of the Monrovia interviews, the question was approached differently by asking: When do you "take" fish from the depot? When do you start selling fish? When do you stop selling fish? The number of hours spent selling fish was thus derived from these answers.

It is worth noting that two problems faced by previous researchers in conducting similar interviews 8/ among market women were not met in our research. There was no problem establishing rapport, due to the approach adopted in Stage I of the survey of becoming acquainted with the fishmammies and trying to understand their problems before approaching them for interviews. Unlike the other research studies, there tended to be hardly any demand for "dash" 9/ before granting an interview. There were cases where the women wanted to know what benefit would accrue to them from the work. By and large, however, the women had a story to tell and were therefore willing to talk since they were hoping something worthwhile for them would result. Equally significant and worth mentioning is that the women were ready to "open-up" since they saw that the consultant was a woman like themselves (all of the other interviewers were men). They took this as a sign that sympathy for their case would be more readily forthcoming, and they said as much.

The Sample

A total of 114 field interviews was conducted both in Monrovia and outside the Monrovia area amongst fishmammies associated with the six depots from which data had been developed earlier. However, the results of only 96 of these interviews are presented here. In one case - Kakata - two different sets of interviews were conducted, on different dates. This was because the mammies associated with that depot were divided into two groups, and the reason for this was unclear. It was therefore decided to interview both groups. Analysis of the data revealed, however, that there were no substantial differences between the two, and it was later learnt that the division was simply done for the convenience of the depot's record keeping purposes. In view of this, and since reporting on the results of both sets of interviews would mean that much heavier weight would be given to the Kakata interview results, in comparison to the others, it seemed appropriate to present the data for only one set of the Kakata interviews. Thus of the 96 interviews, the distribution of fishmammies were as follows:

Buchanan 25 per cent
Monrovia 24 per cent
Gbarnga 17.7 per cent
Kakata 17.7 per cent
Nimba 15.6 per cent

The variation in percentage distribution stems from the approaches adopted. In the areas outside Monrovia, the approach was to interview all the sellers of frozen fish in the major local market place of the particular area. In the Monrovia area, interviewing was conducted at the four major markets identified above as well as at the Bushrod Island Depot. The different approach in the Monrovia area was necessitated by the fact that the Monrovia area has both fishmammies acting as "wholesalers" as well as fishmammies "wholesaler/retailers".

Because of this, the presentation of the interviews results below are divided into two parts: results for the fishmammies "wholesalers" in Monrovia are first presented. These comprise 22 per cent of the Monrovia interviews and 5.2 per cent of the 96 interviews. This is then followed by reports on the Monrovia and outside Monrovia marketplace interviews.

The areas outside Monrovia are reported on comparatively, and direct comparison of them can more appropriately be made with the Monrovia marketplace interviews and not with the Monrovia Bushrod Island Depot interviews which report on the results for the fishmammies "wholesalers". Viewed from this perspective, of the 96 fishmammies interviewed 95 per cent were fishmammy "wholesaler/retailers" (with Monrovia accounting for eighteen of these) while 5 per cent were fishmammy "wholesalers". The ninety-one "wholesaler/retailers" were distributed as follows:

Buchanan	26 per cent
Monrovia	19.7 per cent
Gbarnga	18.7 per cent
Kakata	18.7 per cent
Nimba	16.5 per cent

Data Analysis

The analysis that follows is a simple frequency distribution analysis of the data. As regards reliability of the data, the fact that the results revealed about the same picture in the different interview localities should be sufficient basis for providing the necessary confidence in our findings and their representativeness.

Monrovia

Headmammy "Wholesalers"

The headmammy "wholesalers" all tended to be from the oldest of the industrial fishery depots, Bushrod Island. This depot has nine headmammies. Five of the nine were interviewed.

Asked about their husband's occupation, one had a husband who was a soldier, another had a husband who was not working and in a third case, the question was not applicable since the interviewee was a male, two interviewees did not respond. As for ethnic affiliation, of four respondents, one was Sarpo, one Kru, one Bassa, and one Fanti. On variables to measure the extent of their participation in fish marketing, all five mammies responded that they requisitioned fish daily, four do not sell fish retail in the market, while one sells in the market with her submammies. The four wholesalers request large quantities of fish and distribute them among their customers for sale. Each of these headmammies have between seven and twenty submammies. The headmammies and their submammies generally sell all year round.

Regarding returns from selling fish, all five headmammies said that they receive commission but were unable to state the amount of commission received monthly, due to the fact that the agent subtracts from their commission due any amount outstanding on cartons of fish "taken". One mammy had sold between \$4-6000 worth of fish the week before the interview; another, \$1600 worth. Among the five headmammies there was a considerable range in the number of years that they had spent selling fish - from three years in one case (the only male), eight years in the second case, and 23-25 years in two other cases.

The interviews reported here exclude that with Madam Comfort - whose situation is portrayed in Annex I. These mammies are the backbone of the entire "Mammies System" and its best performers. Headmammies who have left the Bushrod Island Depot for other parts of the country to be amongst the most outstanding in those counties.

Headmammies "Wholesaler/Retailers"

Interviews with mammies in four major market sites in Monrovia covered those headmammies operating in the dual capacity of wholesaler/retailers as well as fishmammies simply retailing fish.

A total of 18 interviews were held with this group in the Monrovia area. This number represented approximately 9 per cent of an average minimum of 200 fish sellers in the four major markets, or 16 per cent of an average minimum of 111 frozen fish sellers in these four markets at any point in time during the rainy season. Of the approximately 6000 market women in Monrovia, these 111 minimum frozen fish sellers account for 1.85 per cent while the 18 interviewed represent .3 per cent of the estimated 6000 market women.

Among this group of mammies, one-third were Fanti, 27.8 per cent each were Kru and Khran, and 5.6 per cent each were (5.6%) Kpelle and Bassa. Sixty per cent reported husbands who were fishermen or farmers, while the remaining respondents had husbands who were clerks or casual workers.

Two-thirds of the women were headmanmies while one-third were submarmies. The headmanmies generally had between three and eight submarmies working for them. A small number (one-sixth of the group) had one - two submarmies. In all 83 per cent of headmanmies had submarmies working for them.

Regarding the quantity of fish they requested at a time, one-third of the marmies reported taking between 6 and 10 cartons, 22 per cent between 25 and 30 cartons, one-sixth between 11 and 14 cartons, eleven per cent between 3 and 5 cartons, another 11 per cent taking 31 or more cartons and 5.6 per cent or taking between 16 - 20 cartons of fish.

The eighteen marmies were asked how many times a week they sell fish. Two thirds responded that they sell four times a week, while the remaining third sell between 2 and 3 times a week. Half identified their selling days as Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, while most of the others sell on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. One mammy responded that she sells daily.

In an effort to obtain some idea of the time spent in the fish marketing business, the mammies were asked what time they "take fish" from the depot. Of sixteen responses, eleven responded that they take fish between 7 - 9 a.m. while five said between 5 - 6 a.m. Most answered that they stopped selling fish between 5 - 6 p.m. Thus nearly seventy per cent spent between nine and eleven hours a day while 31 per cent spend between twelve and thirteen hours daily in fish marketing.

For such long hours, what kind of returns do these women receive? This was approached from several dimensions. The first approach involved a series of questions about total sales on weekdays and the weekend. 72 per cent responded that they did not know how much they made on a given day. Two-thirds did not know how much they made during a weekend of sales. Of those nammies who could give sales figures, three said their sales were between \$200 - \$350; two responded \$1000 - \$2000 and one reported less than \$200.

The mammies were next asked what commission and/or profit they made from selling fish. This proved a difficult question to obtain answers to. Only four responses were obtained to this question - that a profit of between \$1 - \$2.50 could sometimes be obtained on each carton of the fish depending on the type of fish, while at other times no profit whatsoever was made. Rather, losses were the net result of selling. For example, a mammy may have requested a carton of stravida, coded #4, weighing 30 kg. and selling for approximately \$25 a carton, but was only able to realize about \$15 or \$16 when she "laid out" the fish in separate piles to sell. On the question of commissions, six mammies replied that they did not receive commissions while four said that they did but had not "seen it" for a long time.

Three-fourths of the mammies said they sold fish for the earnings it generated. About the same percentage said they use the income for self-support and support of their children. The great majority (about 92 per cent) started by selling for someone else, presumably as a submarmy. Since two-thirds of the mammies interviewed were headmanmies, this indicates mobility in the fish trade from the level of the submarmy (who receives no commission) to that of the headmanmy (technically, commission receiving). The mammies were asked if selling fish was "good" business. Seventy per cent said "yes", in that it provided some small profit on which to live, while the rest responded with reservations, identifying the problem of "lack of commission".

Comparative Analysis of Results

TABLE 9 : SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	BUCH	ANAN	KAI	CATA	GE	ARNGA	NIMBA		
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	
MARITAL STATUS		200 200							
Married	22	91.7	12	70.6	16	94.0	15	100.0	
Single	2	8.3	3	17.6	1	6.0		-	
Widow	-	-	1	5.9	-		10 20		
No Response	-	W	1	5.9				7.5	
HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION			1111		THE OWNER	-			
Clerical	- 5	20.8	1	5.9	_	_	2	13.3	
Sales	ĺ	4.2	2	11.7	-	ال بحريث	_	_	
Service	1	4.2				-			
Fishermen/Farmer	2	8.3		_	3	17.6	2	13.3	
Production Workers	9	37.5	7	41.2	6	35.3	7	46.7	
Other		-	2	11.7	4	23.5	_	-	
Not Working	3	12.5				-	1	6.7	
Not Applicable	3 2	8.3	14	23.5	1	5.9		_	
No Response	1	4.2	1	5.9	3	17.6	3	20.0	
ETHNIC AFFILIATION									
Bassa	17	70.8	9	52.9	_		_		
Kpelle		- 1/20	3	17.6	5	29.4	2	13.3	
Kru	3	12.5	3	17.6	4				
Fanti	4	16.6	ua. 1		-		-	_	
Grebo	11 -12		4.	The state of			6	40.0	
Mandingo	W	-		12781	11	64.7	- <u>- </u>		
Vai	- L	V 4	20				2	13.3	
Other	William !		2	11.7	1	5.9	3	20.0	
No Response		27			12		2	13.3	
OTAL NUMBER OF INTERVI	EWS 24	100.0	. 17	100.0	17	100.0	15	100.0	

N.B. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

The above table reveals that by far the majority of the fishmammies are married including all of these at Gbarnga. This is consistent with Professor Kaba's finding in Monrovia that the majority of market women were married. The majority of the fishmammies' husbands are production workers such as painters, carpenters, drivers, electricians, masons, and mine workers. The proportion is highest in Nimba (46.7%) where the Yekepa Depot is situated in the middle of an iron ore mine at which many of the women's husbands are employed. Next to production work, most husbands were employed in clerical and saleswork or as fishermen and farmers.

The mammies' ethnic affiliation largely reflects the ethnic composition of the particular area (at Buchanan and Kakata) or of those in the area engaged in fish marketing (Gbarnga and Nimba). In Buchanan and Kakata, most of the fishmammies are Bassa. In Gbarnga more than two-thirds were Mandingo women, with nearly another third of the fishmammies. Kpelle women. In Nimba, Grebo accounted for 40 per cent followed by Kpelle. In Monrovia, it may be recalled the fishmammies tended to be primarily Fanti and Kru followed by Khran, Kpelle and Bassa. By and large these are the same groups of people found engaged in the business outside Monrovia.

TABLE 10 : INDICATORS OF PARTICIPATION IN FISH MARKETING

military of the control of the William of	BUCHANAN		KAKATA		GBARNGA		NIMBA	
	no	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
TYPE OF FISHMAMMY		Paller			71.		7, 1	
Headmanny	22	91.7	16	94.0	13	76.5	3*	20.0
Submariny	2	8.3	1	6.0	2	11.7	12	80.0
No Response	10,7		4.3	- - -	2	11.7	7.	3
SUBAMMIES WORKING				1-4	17 16 1		PIT.	
Yes	- 5	20.8	3	17.6	2	11.7	3	20.0
No	17	70.8	13	76.5	10	58.8	_	
Not Applicable	2	8.3	1	5.9	2	17.6	12	80.0
No Response		-	_		3	11.7	-	-
NUMBER OF CARTONS TAKEN		-	-					
1-5 Cartons	15	62.5	8	47.1	16	94.0	7	46.7
6-10 Cartons	3	12.5	5	29.4		_	5	33.3
11-15 Cartons	- 2	8.3	2	11.7	-		2	13.3
16-20 Cartons	-	_	-		_	-		-
20 Plus	1	4.2	2	11.7	-	- 1	_	
No Response	3	12.5	Τ.		1	6.0	1	6.7
NUMBER OF TIMES SELL/WEEK						7	*	*
1-2 Times	1	4.2	_		1	5.8		_
2-3 Times	12	50.0	3	17.6	3	17.6	_	_
3-4 Times		_	12	70.6	_		<u> </u>	
4-5 Times	2	8.3	1	5.9				
6 Plus	6	25.0			13	76.5	-	
Other	ı	4.2	_	_	_	-	_	
No Response	2	8.3	1	5.9	(- I	JE., 1	-	-
NUMBER OF YEARS SELLING FISH		77.7						
Less than 1 Year	2	8.3	_	_	1	5.9	_	_
1 - 5 Years	11	45.8	2	11.7	6	35.3	14	26.6
6 - 10 Years	5	20.8	1	11.7	3	17.6	5	33.3
.11 - 15 Years	2	8.3	5	29.4	5	29.4	4	26.6
16 - 20 Years	4	16.7		41.2	2	11.7	2	13.3
20 PLUS			_			-		
No Response	-	-	1	5.9	-	7-1	-	-
FOTAL NUMBER INTERVIEWED	24	100.0	17	100.0	17.1	.00.0	15	100.0

N.B. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

^{*} The small number of Headmanmies in Nimba is a function of the system that the women there have devised for selling their fish. This same explanation accounts for the blank cells for Nimba for the number of times a week the women sell fish there.

As shown in Table 10 the great majority of mammies in the fish trade outside Monrovia were headmarmies - 92 per cent at Buchanan, 94 per cent at Kakata and 77 per cent at Gbarnga. The exception to this is only 20 per cent headmammies at Nimba where the women have devised a unique system of selling, described earlier, whereby one headmanmy and her submammies sell for four consecutive days, after which another headmanmy and her group sells. Of the three headmanmies found in the market at the time of the questionnaire, it was actually only one of them whose day it was to sell. The others were there "helping her to sell" but not selling for themselves. In Monrovia, headmanmies in the retailers group comprised two-thirds of those interviewed.

In contrast to Monrovia where 83 per cent of the headmannies had submammies working for them at most locations outside Monrovia the headmannies were working by themselves. In Buchanan 70 per cent, in Kakata 77 per cent and at Gbarnga 59 per cent of headmannies had no submammies.

At all four Depots out of Monrovia, the majority of mammies took between one to five cartons of fish. Thus, at Gbarnga the percentage was as high as 94 per cent, followed by 62.5 per cent in Buchanan and 47 per cent at Kakata and Nimba respectively. The next largest number of cartons taken was between six and ten. Together, these two categories accounted for more than 70 per cent of the number of cartons of fish requested at the areas out of Monrovia. Mammies in Monrovia tended to request more cartons of fish.

In Buchanan and Kakata the majority of the women sell fish either two to three times or three to four times a week. In Gbarnga, on the other hand, the majority of the women sell six or more times, a finding consistent with another study on marketing in Gbarnga. 10/ The number of selling days at Gbarnga is striking in light of the small numbers of cartons of fish the mammies had taken (1-5).

Most of the mammies outside Monrovia had been selling fish for between one to ten years. The exception was Kakata, where the majority had been selling for between sixteen to twenty years. In Buchanan, the proportion of those selling for more than sixteen years was also rather high. In most of the cases where the mammies had been selling for sixteen or more years, they were mammies who had been selling earlier at the Bushrod Island Depot in Monrovia.

More than 70 per cent of the mammies outside Monrovia "take fish" between 5:30 - 7:30 a.m., i.e. very early in the morning. Similarly, except in the case of Kakata, the majority of the women (more than 60%) stop selling fish between 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. In Kakata, 64 per cent of the women sell as late as between 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. Thus a majority of the women spend at least twelve hours a day engaged in fish marketing. In Monrovia most fishmanmies were devoting nine to eleven hours to the trade.

TABLE 11 : MEASURES OF ECONOMIC RETURNS FROM SELLING FISH

	BUCHA	NAN	KAK	ATA	GBA	RNGA	NI	MBA
	no.	of 10	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
RECEIVE COMMISSION								
Yes	4	16.7	2	11.8	-	_	3	20.0
No	14	58.3	15	88.2	17	100.0	12	80.0
No Response	6	25.0	-		-		-	
AVERAGE PROFIT FROM ONE CARTON Less than \$1.00	2	8.3	3	17.6		مارخان اسان	1	7.0
\$1.00/2.00	13	54.2	7	41.2	9	52.9	14	93.0
\$2.50/3.25	4	16.6	4	23.5	5	29.4		-
Other*	5	20.8	3	17.6	3	17.6	-	
TOTAL NUMBER INTERVIEWED	24		17		17		15	

N.B. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Efforts to ascertain the total value of the mammies' sales directly proved futile. The majority of them responded that they "did not know" how much they had made at the time of the interview. This was true also in the Monrovia area. On the question of whether commissions were received or not, in general, it would appear that the women did not receive commissions. In Buchanan, Kakata and Gbarnga, the proportions responding that they did not receive commissions were 58 per cent, 88 per cent and 100 per cent. The Nimba situation is rather different since the 80 per cent responding refers to the submammies who generally do not receive commissions.

The average profit from one carton of fish seemed to be between \$1.00 and \$2.00 for the majority of mammies. The next highest number of respondents generally gave an average profit of \$2.50 - \$3.25. The responses were for both the 20 kg and 30 kg cartons, the "short" and "long" carton respectively. In general, the \$1.50 - \$2.00 average profit applies to the 20 kg cartons, and the higher figure to the 30 kg carton. It should be emphasized that the women do not always make a profit. They frequently sustain losses on some cartons of fish, and the profit made earlier has to be applied to make up the losses. Hence the "debt syndrome" that tends to characterize the fish business and which frequently results in an unending "debt trap" for the mammies - even for the best of them, as illustrated in the tables in the annexes.

^{*} Varies from \$4.00 - 6.00 depending on fish type.

The findings for those outside Monrovia area confirmed the Monrovia data. This data was used to calculate the estimated monthly income the marmies derived from selling fish, discussed in Chapter VII. This income was exclusive of commissions since actual receipt of commissions was not automatic; although the commission may have been earned, the commission was often times applied against whatever "debt" had been accrued by a particular headmanmy.

TABLE 12 : FISHMAMMIES' EVALUATION OF THEIR BUSINESS

	BUC	HANAN	KA	KATA	GB	ARNGA	NI	MBA
	no.	%	no.	of Jo	no.	%	no.	al Jo
FISH SELLING - GOOD BUSINESS Yes No Other	19 - 5	79.0	15 - 2	88.2	16 - 1	94.1 - 5.9	14 - 1	93.0 - 7.0
TOTAL NUMBER INTERVIEWED	24	100.0	17	100.0	17	100.0	15	100.0

N.B. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Nearly 80 per cent of the fishmarmies saw fish selling as "good" business. "Good" was interpreted in the sense of providing some small profit or measure of income. In almost every case, the response was that it provided some means of livelihood, and the income earned was used for self-support and child support. These findings were similar to those in Monrovia. As in Monrovia, also, the majority of the women began selling fish by "selling for someone else".

The general picture that emerges from the women fishsellers outside Monrovia is that their scale of business is relatively small. They spend long hours selling fish for minimal returns to their labor; yet they still consider selling fish "good business" since it does provide regular income, no matter how small.

FOOTNOTES

- 1. Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs, Employment and Unemployment in Monrovia, a report on the Monrovia Labour Force Surveys (January and July 1974), Monrovia, Liberia, April 1975.
- 2. Brahima Diakity Kaba, "Relationship between women's economic activities and their family behaviour and expectations in Liberia", (paper presented at 9th World Congress of Sociology, 1978).
- 3. Banke Akerele, "Further Analysis of the MLFS", (paper presented at manpower seminar, November 1978).
- 4. Liberian Federation of Women's Association (see Kaba, "Relationship", Loc. cit.) and Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs.
- 5. University of Liberia, Department of Geography, "Marketing in Gbarnga", Occasional Research Paper, No. 7, 26 July 1975.
- 6. J. Clarke, "The Evolution of Traditional Markets with Emphasis on the Gbarnga Market", Cuttington College Economic Research Project, December 1968 and August 1969, pp. 20-21.
- 7. Field head count of fish sellers at Rally Time Market, West Point General Market, Doula and Logan Town Markets, on 2 September 1978 by consultant and interviewers.
- 8. See J. Clarke, "The Evolution of Traditional Markets", loc. cit.
- 9. A "dash" is a payment in cash or kind as an inducement to be interviewed. It should be pointed out that in appreciation of the tremendous work that they were engaged in and their long hours, at the end of the day when leaving the market we gave ten dollars (to whomever was the head of the mammies) to buy refreshments for everyone.
- 10. J. Clarke, "The Evolution of Traditional Markets", loc. cit.

CHAPTER VII

SIGNIFICANCE OF DEPOT RECORDS AND SURVEY
RESULTS FOR HOW FISHMAMMIES HAVE BEEN
AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter discusses the significance of the data presented in the last three Chapters on how the mammies have been affected by the development of the industry Three dimensions are focussed upon: one, the fishmammies position in the distribution channel; two, the contrast between the mammies economic contribution and benefits derived and three, what is termed the "debt trap".

THE FISHMAMMIES POSITION IN THE DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Chapter II showed that as the industry developed and began to use Lebanese merchants for agents, the mammies were displaced from a dominant position in the distribution channel. Where previously they had operated as direct wholesalers for the Company to the consumers, they lost ground to Lebanese middlemen.

They continued, however, to be very critical to the distribution process, as have been indicated. Their place in the marketing and distribution channel shifted from being the primary wholesalers to that of "sub"-wholesalers" and wholesaler/retailers.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE MAMMIES ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION AND BENEFITS

Commission

Earlier it was pointed out that the agents receive commissions ranging from between \$50 - \$75 per ton. Moreover, as prices of the fish increased from year to year, the agents' commissions in turn experienced yearly growth. 1/ What of the mammies? What has happened with their commissions? Did they participate in this growth?

It should be stressed at the outset that the agents have no formal agreement with the mammies as such. This notwithstanding, it has been shown how the women handle large quantities of fish and how they bring the money to the agents upon completion of sale of a consignment of fish. Technically the mammies should receive commissions for their work. But this is true only at certain depots - the two Monrovia depots and the Nimba depot. They do not receive commissions at the other depots.

Where received, the commissions the mammies get vary from depot to depot. At one Monrovia depots the commission is 15 ¢ per 20 kg carton and 22 ¢ for a 30 kg carton while at the other it is 25 ¢ per 20 kg or 30 kg carton. At the Nimba Depot, the commission is 30 ¢ per carton, both 20 kg and 30 kg. For comparison purposes, these commission rates are converted into commission per ton. Tables 1-7 contain the conversion of the cartons of fish into tonnage. As a "rule-of-thumb", approximately fifty of the 20 kg cartons and thirty-three of the 30 kg cartons equal one ton.

The agents' average commission per ton is about \$62.50, with their commission ranging from \$50 - \$75 per ton. By contrast, calculations of the headmannies commissions on a tonnage basis show the headmannies average commissions to be \$10.37 at the Camp Johnson Road Depot and \$7.86 at the Bushrod Island Depot.

At the Nimba Depot, the eight headnarmies' commissions averaged about \$44 a month in September 1977 and 1978. Tables 15-20 in Annex IV show that the Mammies' commissions tend to be approximately 1.2 per cent of their sales, i.e. their total payments for cartons "requested for". This holds true for both those mammies who sell very large quantities and those who sell relatively smaller quantities.

If the mammies' commission tend to be about 1.2% of their sales, how is it possible that the interviews' results indicate that high proportions of the mammies maintain that they do not receive commission or that they have "not seen the commissions"? The reason is that even those mammies who ostensibly work on a commission basis do not necessarily receive it regularly because of the "debt trap" phenomenon.

The "Debt Trap"

The "debt trap" is an inevitable result of the credit system by which the mammies obtain the cartons of fish for sale, described in detail in Chapter IV and V. On receiving the fish on credit, it is assumed that the mammy will be able to obtain at least the value of the fish that the agent has charged her. But only upon sale of the fish in the market is the worth of the carton of fish determined and realised.

Throughout the interviews there were countless references that "the money remained inside the box". That meant that whereas a carton of fish was valued at a certain amount at the depot, on actual sale in the market by the mammies, they were able to realize less than the amount at which the box was valued. The women cited by the examples of a sole fish coded as XSR (termed "Poto Poto" by the women) valued at the depot at approximately \$18.75 but which sells at a loss for \$15, or the small mackerel (coded Stravida) which sells for \$25.60 per carton at the depot but is only able to realize \$10 - \$12 on sale in the market; or the fish the women term "Bossewe", a stockfish that sells at a loss of about \$3. Obviously there are profits made on certain types of the fish that compensate for the losses cited here; more is said on this in the following section.

The examples of losses have been cited to explain how the women find themselves indebted to the agents. Another factor accounting for the debt is that the sub-mammies who sell for the headmannies do not always report back the exact amount of the sales for the fish taken. It is not clear whether the sub-mammies simply borrow the money made or whether they too experience the same problem with regard to realization of the value of the fish in the market place. Both factors clearly contribute to the problem, though it is not so clear which carries the greater weight.

Tables 15-20 in Annex IV document the "debt trap" phenomenon, using data from the Bushrod Island Depot. Stated simply, the mammies accumulate debt through their inability to make payments to the agent for the value of the total "tickets" taken. The difference between the value of total tickets taken and total payments made during a month is the balance of the tickets outstanding which added to whatever previous tickets (previous debt) remained outstanding at the beginning of the month results in her total debt. From this debt is subtracted the commission earned by the mammy during the month on her sales, and what remains is the "actual debt owed" by the mammy.

Tables 15-20 (Annex IV) illustrate this phenomenon in both February and September for the years 1976 and 1977. From these Tables, it is seen that even the best sellers are caught in the "trap" which seems generally unaffected by the changing seasons. Debt ranges from 10 to 24 per cent of total tickets. With this type of a situation, the mammies' responses that they "have not seen" their commission can be better appreciated.

Income from Selling Fish

Because of the debt problem inherent in the sales system and its implications for the mammies' commissions, an attempt was made to arrive at some measures of the income the women make from selling fish. The measure was developed without any allowance for mammies commission. Rather, it was based on what the mammies identified as the "profit" made from selling a carton of fish in the market place.

Close study of the data obtained from the interviews revealed that the mammies' profits range from \$1.00 - \$2.00 on the 20 kg cartons and from \$2.00 - \$3.50 on the 30 kg cartons depending on the particular type of fish. Calculation of losses proved more difficult since there was considerable variation in the amount of loss cited on a particular carton. An average loss of \$1.33 on the 20 kg carton and \$50 on the 30 kg carton was finally arrived at. Taking these factors into consideration, an average monthly income was estimated (using the Kakata Depot data) for the mammies. The results are contained in Tables 13 and 14.

TABLE 13 : ESTIMATED INCOME FROM SALES OF FISH OF 10 MAMMIES WITHIN A WEEK IN AUGUST 1978

FISH MAMMY	20 KG CARTON	PRICE \$	PROFIT \$	FISH MAMMY	30 KG. CARTON	PRICE \$	PROFIT \$
(A)	18	359.36	36.00	(A)	13	326.26	45.50
(B)	16	311.56	32.00	(B)	7	145.61	24.50
(C)	21	372.47	42.00	(c)	8	204.39	28.00
(D)	28	378.02	56.00	(D)	13	335.89	45.00
(E)	24	411.61	48.00	(E)	15	336.93	52.50
(F)	16	330.12	32.00	(F)	15	337.27	52.50
(G)	10	174.39	20.00	(G)	12	253.27	42.00
(H)	11	236.79	22.00	(H)	8	189.39	28,00
(I)	9	209.28	16.00	(I)	11	276.46	38.50
(J)	9	210.79	18.00	(3)	7	162.82	24.50
TOTAL	161	2,994.39	322.00	TOTAL	109	2,568.29	381.00

SOURCE: DATA FROM MESURADO FISH DEPOT AT KAKATA

ESTIMATED MONTHLY INCOME FOR A MAMMY: \$35.15 x 4 = \$140.60

TABLE 14: ESTIMATED LOSSES FROM SALES OF FISH OF 10 MAMMIES WITHIN A WEEK IN AUGUST 1978

FISH MAMMY	20 KG. CARTON	PRICE \$	LOSS \$	FISH MAMMY	30 KG. CARTON	PRICE \$	LOSS \$	
(A)	18	359.36	24.00	(A)	13	326.26	6.50	
(B)	16	311.56	21.33	(B)	7	145.61	3.50	
(C)	21	372.47	28.00	(C)	8	204.39	4.00	
(D)	28	378.02	37.33	(D)	13	335.89	6.50	
(E)	24	411.16	32.00	(E)	15	336.93	7.50	
(F)	16	330.12	21.33	(F)	15	337.27	7.50	
(G)	10	174.39	13.33	(G)	12	253.27	6.00	
(H)	11	236.79	14.67	(H)	8	189.39	4.00	
(I)	8	209.28	10.67	(I)	11	276.46	5.60	
(J)	9	210.79	12.00	(J)	7	162.82	3.50	
TOTAL	161	2,994.39	214.66	TOTAL	109	2,568.29	54.60	

SOURCE: DATA FROM MESURADO FISHING DEPOT AT KAKATA

ESTIMATED MONTHLY LOSSES FOR A MAMMY:

 $$13.46 \times 4 = 53.85

^{*} WHEN ALLOWANCE IS MADE FOR LOSSES, THIS FIGURE REDUCES TO \$86.95

Table 13 shows the estimated income of a fishmammy for a month <u>assuming</u> that the mammy makes a profit on every carton of fish sold. The table further assumes a profit of \$2.00/20 kg carton and \$3.50/30 kg carton. Both of these are the upper limit of the profit realized per carton. For the mammies at the Kakata Depot, their estimated profit on the 20 kg and 30 kg cartons totalled \$322 and \$381 respectively or an average profit of \$35.15 during a week in August 1978, this is projected on a monthly basis. From this must be subtracted an estimated loss of \$53.85 monthly (Table 14 shows the estimated losses from the sales of fish of 10 mammies during the same week in August. Table 14 assumes an average loss of \$1.33 on the 20 kg carton and an average of \$.50 on the 30 kg carton). The result is an estimated monthly net income of \$86.95.

If the assumptions about average profits per carton of 20 kg and 30 kg are adjusted slightly downward to the \$1.50 and \$2.50 levels respectively, the average profit would be \$102.80 a month. Subtracting the estimated loss of \$53.85, this would result in an estimated monthly net income of \$48.95. Thus, the average monthly net income of the fishmammies may range from approximately \$50 - \$87.

The income calculated above is relevant for the "wholesaler/retailer headmammies and the sub-mammies. For the wholesaler headmammies their commissions, when received, would constitute their monthly income.

The mammies stated that the profits made from selling are used primarily to support themselves and their children, and to make up for any losses sustained. Thus, in the absence of a guaranteed commission, one wonders why the mammies continue to sell. They claim that fish selling is the only "market" they know, having become used to it now. The mammies also maintained that fish selling is "good" business. There were references to the time when fish prices were reasonable and when money earned from selling was used to contribute to the building of a "small house". But since then, the price of fish has increased about three-fold, from \$6 or \$8 to \$24 and \$26 per carton in certain cases. It is clear that the mammies have known better days, and that their situation has deteriorated relatively. As the mammies explained, when the fish business first started, there was "money inside" but generally the reverse now appears to be the case.

FOOTNOTES

Interview with sales manager, Mesurado Fishing Company, November 1978.

CHAPTER VIII

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter four major implications of the study are identified:
(1) for the modern "formal" and traditional "informal" sectors relation—
ship; (2) how structural changes in the industry may affect certain
groups; (3) for further developments and improvements of the position of
women entrepreneurs; (4) for the further development of the fishing
industry in Liberia.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MODERN "FORMAL" AND TRADITIONAL "INFORMAL" SECTORS RELATIONS

The study has implications for several dimensions of the modern "formal" and traditional "informal" sector relationship.

A. The role of the fishmammies in the marketing and distribution of the industrial fishery clearly identifies the extent of the linkages that exist between the two sectors. Moreover, the quantitative measures of the mammies contribution to the sales of the industrial fishery underscored the fact that the those linkages are critical to the success of the industry. Thus, the study illustrates — the case where a modern sector economic activity is largely dependent on an "informal" sector economic activity for the execution of a critical function. Equally significant is the fact that the "formal" modern sector in this instance utilised a marketing system (Figure 1) developed by the "informal" sector enterpreneurs and found it ideally suited to their purposes.

From this, it is hypothesised that the extent of dependence of the modern "formal" sector on the "informal" sector may be a function of the extent to which labour-intensive capabilities (which the "informal" sector tends to have in abundance) are required by the particular modern sector activity. One may cite the case of modern agricultural activities that tend to require casual labourers or again, one may undertake a study of the casual labour market to ascertain which types of activities tend to make the most use of it in an effort of testing the hypothesis.

B. There are levels of employment and income stratification within the "informal" sector, as demonstrated by the headmammies/submammies relation—ship. Among the headmammies were women who had previously been employed in the "formal" sector as cooks, drivers or storage room "boys" and had made a decision to leave their regular income-earning jobs in the "formal" sector to participate in "informal" sector actively.

Indeed, on the basis of the Monrovia Labour Force Survey findings regarding earnings, the fishmammies' earnings are comparable to the monthly earnings of nessengers and drivers in the public sector. Their earnings also compare with the monthly income of the women workers at the processing plant of the industrial fishery ranging from about \$75 - 125.

The foregoing suggests a hypothesis that at the lower earnings end of the formal wage sector (e.g. messengers, drivers, store boys, etc.) earnings may be more or less comparable to (but not significantly higher than) earnings or the prospects for such earnings at certain strata of the informal sector, resulting in movements between the two sectors. 1/ Noteworthy in this regard is a finding of a study on the informal sector in Peru that thirty-seven per cent of the self-employed earned as much as, or more than, the modal earnings in the formal sector. 2/ This being the case, it may well be part of the explanation for the high degree of mobility at certain low wage levels in the formal sector that one finds in Liberia.

C. There is need for studies on the manifestations of the informal sector in Liberia so as to ascertain its more positive elements and at the same time to better understand what constitutes the labour market in Liberia. 3/

IMPLICATIONS OF HOW STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN INDUSTRY MAY AFFECT CERTAIN GROUPS

The change in the position of the mammies as well as in their returns from the business, despite the fact that they continue to perform a very critical role, is indicative of the kind of deterioration in the position of one group vis-a-vis another that can occur as structural changes take place in an industry. In this particular case, however, the fact that the mammies are not directly engaged by the industrial fishery, but rather perform a function for them in the informal sector, tends not to make this as apparent as it otherwise would have been.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The roles played by the headmammies and more particularly the headmammy wholesalers is best described as entrepreneurial. In West Africa entrepreneurs often start off as traders. Cases in point are Madam Comfort and others of the major headmammies both in Monrovia and outside Monrovia (at Kakata, for example, marmies take consignments of fish by taxi for sale elsewhere).

Furthermore, the performance of these women, and their continuation in the business over a considerable number of years, throws light on the potential skills and marketing knowledge of these largely uneducated women. This in turn suggests the need for effective Government-supported institutions such as entreprenurial development units and credit facilities to cater to such relatively simple activities that could further be developed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY

The study suggests that should the expansion of the fishing industry through the development of the artisanal fisheries take place as the Bureau of fisheries anticipates will occur in time, the existing system of distribution would probably continue. However, there would obviously have to be some improved technologies applied to fish marketing. The industrial fishery can be expected to continue to make use of the marmy system.

The fact that the two branches of the industry - the artisanal and the industrial - stemmed from different origins and pursued separate growth paths probably accounts for the lack of development of a system that more appropriately rewards the mammies for their labours. Not being directly part of the formal modern sector, yet generally acknowledged by the industrial fishery as their "real salesmen", it can be expected that with the further development of the industrial fishery, the mammies will tend to be by-passed and not participate (via returns) in the growth of the industry as they rightly should given the present arrangements.

FOOTNOTES

- 1. See OluBanke Akerele, "The Informal Sector in Liberia", paper presented at the Manpower Seminar, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Monrovia, October November 1978.
- 2. Quoted in Mazumdar Dipak, "The Urban Informal Sector", World Bank Staff Working Paper, No. 211, July 1975.
- 3. Robert Neal, "The Liberian Labour Market", paper presented at the Manpower Seminar, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs.

 Monrovia, October November 1978.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction, it was stated that the study should be viewed within the context of the creation of a "New International Economic Order" which in turn has implications for the restructuring of the present economic order at the national and regional levels. One of the objectives of such restructuring is the progressive eradication of unemployment and mass poverty; hence the concern with the urban poor, the rural masses and women.

In the qualitative and quantitative survey of the role of women traders in fish marketing, the study has documented the critical role of women in the marketing of marine produce in one West African country. It can be seen as a contribution to the recommendations for follow-up activities expressed in the report of the Seminar on the Role of Women in Marketing Local Farm and Marine Produce in West Africa. 1/

The study confirms the high degree to which marine produce trade is in the hands of women in Liberia. More particularly, the study has highlighted the importance of women to the industrial fishery and has shown how a sophisticated industrial complex effectively utilizes women at both the processing and distribution ends of its operations. At the distribution end, it has shown how a marketing system developed around depots employed sophisticated modern equipment (cold storage facilities) as demanded by the requirements of the modern formal sector while making use of the informal sector traditional approaches to marketing and distribution.

It is not clear that the nature of the credit system that is at the base of the entire operation is in the best interests of the mammies in the long run. The reasons are two fold: one is that despite the critical role the women play, not all the depots give them commissions. Only at three depots did we find that the commission system operates as it should technically. At the others, the mammies must rely on whatever profits they may make from sale of the fish - ranging from \$50 - \$86 monthly, as illustrated by the data, despite the large number of fish that they handle. Given the long hours spent in selling fish, such returns are clearly small. Moreover, it must be remembered that the \$86 monthly earnings figure was an estimate based on assumptions of a rather high average profit per carton of fish.

The second reason is the "debt trap" phenomenon that the mammies find themselves caught in. Thus, even where sizeable commissions of \$188 or \$316 or \$447 per month 1/ commensurate more or less with the size of their fish sales the mammies may find that they are unable to claim their commission.

While it is evident that without a credit system, the mammies would not be able to obtain any fish, it is equally the case that the industrial fishery's marketing of its products is almost entirely dependent on the mammies. This explains why although a mammy may be indebted to an agent, the agent continues to allow her to take additional consignments of fish. In short, the relationship is a symbiotic one. As one of the agents expressed it, "If the mammies do not sell, the agents do not sell and if the agents do not sell, the industrial fishery complex does not sell". 3/ This being the case then, there is need for a better appreciation of the various dimensions of the "debt trap" phenomenon.

The existence of the "debt trap" together with the position voiced by the mammies that before they were able to make <u>susu</u> from their fish selling business, but now the "time is too hard" to do even this since profits are "too small" are both indications that the mammies' position has deteriorated relatively as conditions in the formal end of the business have improved.

According to the findings of the Monrovia Labour Force Survey (MLFS). the fishmammies as a group fall within the 48 per cent of persons in Monrovia with monthly earnings of \$40 - \$124. Of this group, 37 per cent were found in the \$40 - \$79 range while approximately 11 per cent were at the higher end of the range (\$80 - \$124) of monthly earnings. It is interesting to note that the women employed in the formal structure of the industrial fishery complex earn from \$75 to \$125 a month. Another finding of the MLFS relevant to this study is that more than 50 per cent of those surveyed earned less than \$80 a month while 84 per cent of the women "making market" earned less than \$80 a month and 74 per cent of the men "making market" earned less than \$80 per month. When the higher estimate for profit per carton is taken, the fishmammies have relatively better earnings than other persons "making market" while the lower profit estimate places them within the same monthly earnings group as the majority of those "making market". Whichever is the case, the fishmammies as a group (the exception being the headmammies "wholesalers") form part of the urban poor and according to a proposed socio-economic classification of Liberian consumers 4/ developed by the writer, belong in the lower economic class with monthly income of a maximum of \$124.

FOOTNOTES

- FAO, Market Women in West Africa, Report of the Seminar on the Role of Women in Marketing Local Farm and Marine Produce, December 1977, Accra.
- 2. See Tables 15-20 in Annex IV.
- 3. Conversation with Bushrod Island Agent, July 1978.
- 4. Banke Akerele, Proposed Social-Economic Classification of Liberian Consumers (for marketing use), presented at a seminar on Industrial Feasibility Studies in Liberia sponsored by the UNIDO Team/LDG, Monrovia, Liberia, September 1977. In Liberia, those earning less than \$125 a month do not pay income tax. This suggests a possible basis for the development of the income classification of the wage and salaries earners, though empirical research would be required to further document this.

CHAPTER X

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Two sets of recommendations are contained in this Chapter. The first set are recommendations specific to the industrial fishery complex in the light of the study's findings and conclusions. The second set are more general recommendations that are more appropriately addressed to Government and international organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INDUSTRIAL FISHERY COMPLEX

The Commission Issue

The finding that not all the agents give the headmammies commissions is cause for alarm. The argument that the women are in effect working for themselves when they sell fish can hardly be accepted, given the position documented in the conclusion that if the mammies did not sell, the agents would not sell and in turn the industrial fishery complex would not profit. The mammies are clearly selling for the agents, and they should be renumerated accordingly.

Once this principle is accepted and implemented, what should be the amount of the commission? To answer this requires more information on various dimensions of the agents' costs than is available to the writer. However, one approach would be to take into consideration both the agents' cost structure over time, the growth in his commission over time, as well as increases in the price of fish and the women's contribution to the depot's sales. Such factors would form the basis for arriving at what would be a fairer commission structure for the mammies.

From the perspective of the marmies, they see yearly price increases but find themselves no better off. At one of the inland depots, the marmies foresee the prospect of leaving the fish business to "make farm" should their situation not improve. Improving their commission would, it is maintained, encourage more people to sell fish. Suggestions from the marmies range from between $25\not e-50\not e$ and $40\not e-75\not e$ commissions for the short (20 kg) and long (30 kg) cartons respectively.

Yet another possibility might be to put the headmammies on some basic monthly salary to assure them of some income at month's end since they generally do not receive their commission until they have cleared their debt. In the case of one of the main headmammies at the Bushrod Island Depot, for example, she received a commission of \$120 after three months of debt payment, having earned a commission of \$550.

The "Debt Trap" Phenomenon

There appears an urgent need to better understand the cause of this phenomenon. The verification of debt tables in Annex IV show how debt as a proportion of total tickets tends to be in the range of 20 - 24 per cent. What does this suggest? The mammies' cries that the "money remains inside the box" and that they always have to credit money to pay on the fish suggest that are certain types of fish that do not sell as they should. There is also the issue of a certain amount of non-payment from the mammies' customers - their submammies.

It is recommended that a serious attempt to study this problem be undertaken. As part of these efforts, it is further recommended that a monthly prize be made available at each depot to the mammy with a debt not more than a certain proportion of sales. The ultimate aim would be to reduce this proportion as much as possible. This would require a certain amount of monitoring to see to what extent the "debt trap" phenomenon is being affected.

The industrial fishery complex should itself benefit from such an experiment (it could concentrated at the Monrovia Depot as a pilot undertaking) since in the long run, the accumulation of debt ultimately affects its sales performance. The possible effects that the "debt trap" can have on a depot's performance was manifested recently at the Bong Mines Depot where it had reached alarming proportions. 1/ It is suggested that the prize be set up at the expense of the fishery complex and the agents and the debt trap study be a joint responsibility. The commission issue is more the agents' responsibility, though the impetus would have to come from the fishery complex itself.

C. Establishment of Fund for Manmies' Children

The last recommendation is that the industrial fishery complex in recognition of the key role played by the mammies should consider the establishment of a fund that would assist in the education of the mammies' children. This would be a considerable boost to the mammies and would invariably yield long term dividends to the Company. It should be pointed out that the industrial complex and the depots have always made contributions to the mammies for their Christmas and national day celebrations.

RECOMMENDATION TO GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. Implications for Fisheries' Development as a Whole

This study of the industrial fishery complex suggests the need for a more concerted effort at studying the artisanal fisheries and its marketing and distribution aspects to ascertain what implications there might be for the development of the fisheries sector as a whole. There is need for continuation of the survey of the artisanal fisheries by the Bureau of Fisheries and coverage of all its dimensions as proposed in the original survey.

B. Creation of Support Facilities that Would Stimulate the Further Development of "Informal" Sector Activities

1. A study on the traditional markets in the Gbarnga area highlighted the possible role of marketing cooperatives in extension of credit to sellers; this could lay the foundations for an improved marketing system. 2/ This study has documented how the depot credit system facilitated and stimulated the further development of the marketing of fish as an informal sector activity. It was also shown, however, that the operation of the system does not necessarily work to the long term interest of the marmies. Marketing cooperatives could also operate as alternative sources for credit

extension to the marries. This would, in turn, result in greater incentives to sellers and further stimulate the income-generating potential of this particular informal sector activity, as well as others in marketing activities.

2. The statistics developed underscored the impressive performance of the marmies in the selling of fish. Credit being their key requirement, the formation of a fishmarmies' cooperative would make it possible for them to obtain loans on a cooperative basis. This of course presupposes the existence of some development finance institution catering to the stimulation and development of entrepreneurial activities on a small scale.

Given the concern with the assessment of the current position of women in production and distribution activities with the view to "making recommendations on ways and means of increasing and upgrading the participation of women in those fields" 3/, international organizations could play a pioneering role in making money available to such institutions for financial assistance to women involved in such marketing activities. Such a scheme would conceivably also have implications for the further development of the artisanal fisheries' sector as well. Overall, the net result would be more self-employment as well as increased earnings. Experience from this might be profitably applied to other informal sector economic activities, thereby stimulating their further development.

The report ends on a note of caution. When research of this nature is undertaken, it inevitably raises hopes that there will be some changes made, that some improvements will occur. With the recent interest in women in development, great pains must be taken to avoid the dangers of awakening expectations where prospects for their realisation do not exist. In this case, concrete proposals have been made to which, it is hoped, some consideration can be given.

FOOTNOTES

- 1. During the latter half of 1978 the marmies at that depot were refusing to settle their debts, maintaining that its accumulation was not entirely due to them.
- 2. Clarke, "The Evolution of Traditional Markets", loc. cit.
- 3. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3505(XXX) December 1975; see introduction, p. 2.

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MADAM COMFORT'S STORY

Madam Comfort or "Comfort" as she is popularly called, is the woman who introduced the "Marry System" to the industrial fishery complex. Her ethnic origin is Kru, from Sinoe.

According to her account, she has been with the industrial fishery since its beginnings in 1955. When asked how she began selling fish she related the following story: The founder and manager of the company asked if she would help him sell fish. Her response was that if he would trust her, she would help him. From then, she continued, he gave instructions that she be given whatever fish she wanted.

"Comfort" recalls that the first case of fish she took was a fish called "Beard Beard" on which she made 50¢ and gave the Company \$2.50, a 20 per cent profit. Such was the beginning of a system that was to become an integral part of the entire industrial fishery complex.

She relates also how she brought more people to "help build up the company, to make more money". She takes pride in pointing out that she brought in the woman who is now the leading seller at the Bushrod Island Depot. The writer met other of her protegees in the course of the study.

According to "Comfort", she started the fish business because she did not want to marry; she wanted to be independent. Her initial capital was \$600. Upon obtaining the fish, she turned them over to her "submammy" who in turn gave them to Fanti women to sell and dry. She kept the \$600 to "make up" whenever the Company's money was short.

After almost twenty-five years in the fish business, having started with the industrial fishery complex in her thirties, "Comfort" maintains that "the fish is too expensive and there is no profit now; it is just for the commission now (we) wait for".

She tells how about 15 years ago over a two-year period she was able to build her first house from "fish money" in New Kru Town. She now owns several houses with basic utilities and rents out rooms. She recalls how she used to make \$200 per nonth commission from selling fish when the commission was 10¢ a carton. Today "Comfort" sells only a small quantity of fish for herself - about 30 cartons a week. She no longer gives fish to others to help sell.

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She lives on a small pension of \$150 per month from the company and the agent combined, and on income of \$20 from each of her rented rooms. Her first investments were in taxis but as she puts it, her "luck was just not there".

"Confort" also provides insights into the historical development of the industry. She recalls that "first time others were fishing but now there is only one company".

Such then is the story of the beginning of the fishmammy system. From "Comfort" it is clear that its birth was synonomous with the beginning of the commercial industrial fisheries. It would not be far amiss therefore to suggest that had there not been a Madam Comfort, the course of development of the industrial fishery might well have been different. She and her system represented the surety that the embryonic industry required for the selling of its fish, and upon which it has become dependent.

SAMPLE
OF A
"TICKET"

The above are photocopy samples of "tickets", the invoice documenting the number of cartons of different fish types and weights taken by a particular mammy on 5 July 1977 and 24 July 1978, respectively.

TECHNICAL NOTE ON DEVELOPMENT OF MEASURES OF MAMMIES' PERFORMANCE (TABLE 1 - 7)

Since the mammies' request by cartons and the depot records are maintained in tonnages, each mammie's monthly requisition had to be converted from cartons to tons of fish. (The agents maintained their records in cartons as well).

It was necessary to obtain a listing of the different types of fish by 20 kg and 30 kg cartons and convert these into tonnages. It was discovered through detailed study of the records that for every 20 kg carton of fish taken, two 30 kg cartons are also taken. Thus, after arriving at the total number of cartons for a particular mammy, the ratio expressing the above relationship was applied to the total.

Referring to the Bushrod Island Depot Table for September 1976 (Table 1) the conversion of 2,427 cartons of fish into tons would proceed as follows:

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Conversion of 64,720 kilograms into tons requires dividing by 1000 number of kilograms to a ton,

hence the figure of 64.72 tons.

Having made the conversion, it was then possible to derive what proportion of the depot sales were accounted for by any particular headmammy.

TABLES 15-20

NOTES ON INTERPRETATION OF TABLES 15-20

The significance of these Tables lies in the fact that they serve to highlight the contrast between the economic contribution of the mammies and the benefits derived.

This is done through an analysis of the mammies' sales records in the course of a month. For example, from Table 15 it will be seen that during the low season (February 1976) a mammy requested a total of 533 cartons valued at \$6,956.14, the value of her "total tickets". At the end of that month, her payments to the agents totalled \$6,678.26, leaving a balance of \$277.88 outstanding on her tickets. From the first set of figures under the B/F (brought forward) column of the Table, it will be seen that at the beginning of the month, she was already indebted to the agent \$1,391.25. When her newly-acquired debt of \$277.88 is added to this figure of \$1,391.25, the net result is an increase of her debt to \$1,669.13 (balance of debt) at the end of the month. Hence the previous debt has been verified. Here is an instance where the debt is 24 per cent of the value of "total tickets" during the month.

The commission earned by the mammy on the 533 cartons is \$35.05, or 1.2 per cent of the value of the total tickets. This commission is deducted from her total debt at the end of the month, leaving her an "actual debt owed" of \$1,584.08, which is to be liquidated through the same process documented above. Thus, the mammy must request more fish to be able to pay off her debt, while in the very process of so doing, she accumulates more debt. Hence the description of this phenomenon as the "debt trap".

TAPLE 15

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OF PREVIOUS DEBT TOTAL TICKET TOTAL PAYMENT BALANCE OF TICKET BALANCE OF TICKET	CALCULATION OF COMMISSION 139 x 15 = 2035 295 x 22.5 = 6637.5 434 TOTAL = 8722.5 = \$87.23 - 87.23	
PREVIOUS DEBT	\$ 1429.94 ACTUAL DEBT OWED	

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QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED

TO

FISHMAMMIES

(SEPTEMBER 1978) DATE: MARKET: MARRIED: YES NO OTHER (1) Name of Mammy: ______ : ____ Head Mammy HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION: ----- Sub Mammy (2) Ethnic Affiliation: (3) Do you have Sub-mammies working for you? _____ Yes (4) (a) What time do you take fish from Depot? (b) What time do you start selling fish each day?____ (c) What time do you stop selling fish? (5) How many cartons of fish did you take today?____ a) No. of "long" cartons _____ b) No. of "short" cartons (6) Have you sold all cartons taken? _____ Yes _____ No (a) If not, how many left over? (b) What will you do with what you do not sell?_____ (c) When will you sell the leftovers?____ (7) How many times a week do you take fish? (a) How many times a week do you sell fish? (b) What days do you or sub-mammies sell fish?_____ (c) What do you do on days you don't sell fish? (a) Do you get commission from "old man" for selling fish? Yes No (b) If yes, how much?

FOR (CAMP (c)	JOHNSON ROAD DEPOT ONLY: Did "old man" give commission when he was at "Vai Town"? Yes	_No										
		If yes, how many times?											
	(e)	Have you ever got commission since moved to "Camp Jonhson Road" Depot? Yes No											
	(f)	If yes, how many times?											
(0)	(a)	How much money did you make from selling today? \$											
())		How much money did you make from selling this week? \$											
		How much did you make last Saturday \$											
		How much did you make last week? \$											
(10)		n do you give "old man" your money?											
Ė		Same day that you sell in the evening?											
		Next day in the morning when you take fish?											
	(c)	Next day in the evening when you take fish?											
(11)	What	t do you do with the money you get from selling fish?											
	-												
(12)	(a)	How long have you been selling fish?											
	(b)	How did you begin selling fish?											
	(c)	Does "old man" ask for deposit before you take fish?Yes	_No										
	(d) Have you always sold fish for yourself or someone else?												
		For Self Someone else											
	(0)	Is selling fish good business? Yes No											
	(6)	If yes, why?											
		II yes, wily.											
		If no. why?											
(13)	How	do you get your fish to market? Taxi depot protranspor											
(14)	How	much money do you make for yourself a day when you sell fish? \$_											

COMM	ENT BY INTERVIEWER :		
(15)	(a) Selling for:	MESURADO	OTHER
	(b) Selling:	FRESH FISH	DRIED FISH
	(c) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:		
(16)	Do you join <u>Susu</u> ?	Yes	No
(17)	If yes, what is the amount monthly?	you have to put in the "Sus	u" weekly or
(18)	If no, why not?		
(19)	Do you sell fish all year	round? Yes	No
(20)	If no, (a) For what months	do you not sell?	
	(b) What do you do	during the months you do not	sell?