

From South India to Senegal **TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER WITH A DIFFERENCE**

When Malick Gueye, a master fisherman from Guet N'Dar (St Louis), Senegal, dropped in at Manakkudi, a fishing village of South India, to renew acquaintance with Mariadas, a fishworker he had met at an ICSF conference in Thailand, little did either one realise that that was the beginning of a surprising and fruitful relationship.

The only language they shared was that of fishing. Malick was intrigued by the trammel net at Mariadas' home. He had never seen one before. Made of three layers of nylon mesh - the middle one loose, with small, 50 mm meshes and two narrower ones with bigger mesh size of 240 mm-these are locally called 'disco' nets, after the music style then popular in India when the trammel net was introduced.

Used mainly to catch prawns during the July-August season, the South Indian fishermen fabricate these nets at home. Malick soon wanted to know everything

about this net, which he felt would be very useful back home in Senegal, where prawns were plenty but exploited only by the industrial trawlers. Only river fishermen caught prawns, of the smallest variety, in shallow areas of the river at night with a dragnet. If only 2 the local fishworkers could learn to catch prawns at sea and compete with the trawlers!

ICSF agreed to Malick's request for a demonstration of the trammel net in Senegal, in collaboration with Aliou Sall and his centre CREDETIP. Who better to demonstrate the net than Mariadas? Mariadas was keen to go, provided a Tamil interpreter could be taken along. ICSF arranged for FMT Raj (Raju), technical manager, Boat Building Centre, Muttom, Tamil Nadu, India and Pierre Gillet, Secretary, ICSF Brussels Office to be part of the team.

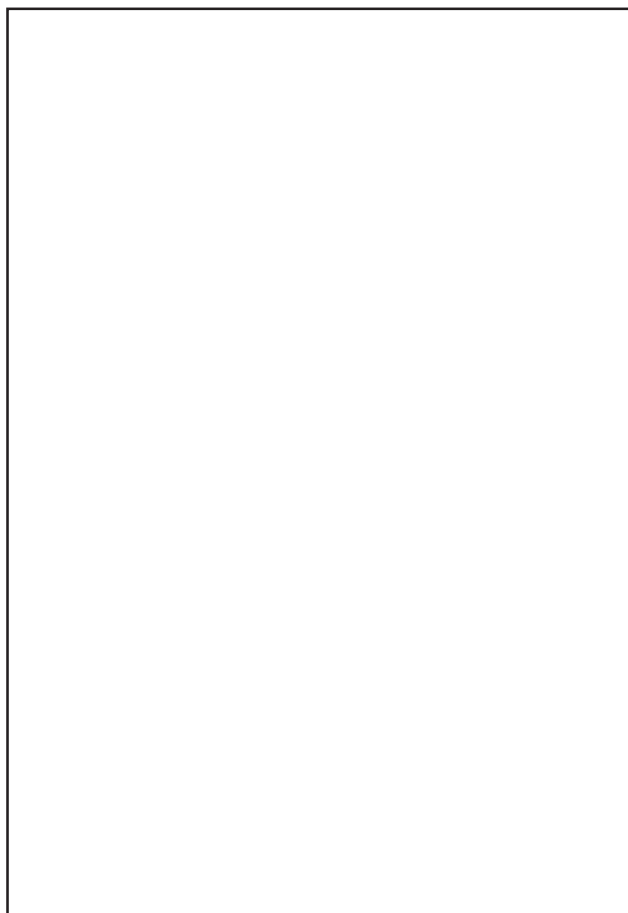
Mariadas and Raju first sent CREDETIP samples of the materials required to ascertain that they were available in Senegal. They then prepared four sets of trammel nets without the lead weights, to facilitate air transport. They also took along material for a fifth net as well as enough floats.

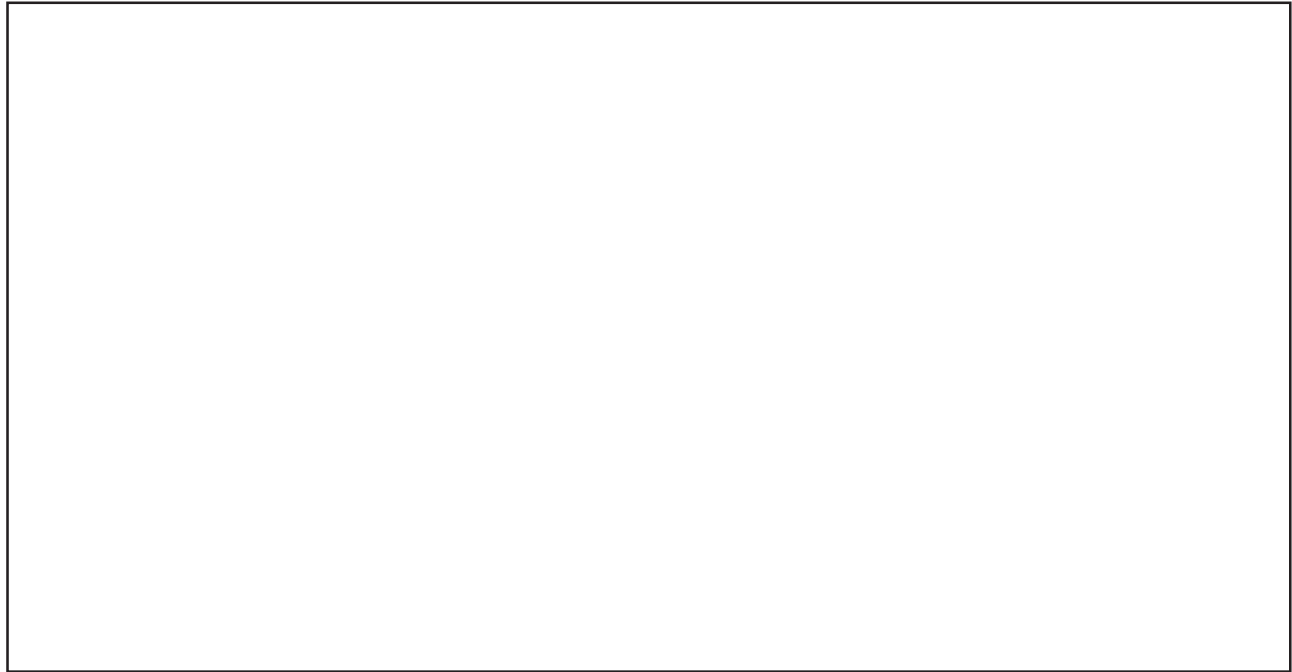
Meanwhile, in Senegal, Malick and the National Collective of Senegalese Fishworkers were preparing to receive the team from India. When they finally arrived in Dakar, Senegal on 12 May, problems arose. They could not procure the necessary materials which were out of stock and would have to be imported, meaning a wait of two months. Making the lead locally would take at least a fortnight.

Raju suggested a solution the use of nuts of equivalent weight. Mariadas agreed, rather grudgingly, for he was worried not just about the cost of the nuts but also of his 'image' before the Senegalese fishworkers!

On 15 May the team, along with Malick, met the local leaders of St Louis to show them the nets. The responses were incredulous: "Big meshes for big fish, and small meshes for small fish?" Some doubted if it was not actually a gill-net. But everyone was now waiting for the sea trials.

The next day the Indians prepared two sets of nets. While fixing the weights along the bottom-line, they





clarified to the crowd of curious Senegalese fishermen that Indian fishworkers do not work with 'nuts and bolts', but that they could not get the proper lead weights in Dakar! Used to much heavier weights, the Senegalese fishermen expressed reservations about the distribution of the total weight among so many nuts.

Mariadas demonstrated how to fix the nuts. Soon, Massen, the vice-president of the Senegalese fishworkers' organization, followed suit. A couple of river fishermen joined, insisting they should get priority to test the net in the river.

On Sunday, the next day, the team went on a fishing trip in the river with a country-boat and the two trammel nets totalling 108 m in length. After two hours, they reached the estuary where they set the net in a very strong tidal current at 7 fathoms. After an hour, they lifted the net to find some fish, a lot of crabs, but no prawns. The presence of crabs indicated that the setting of the nets was correct and their bottom lines-well positioned.

Not having caught prawns depressed the morale of the Indians. Mariadas sensed that only Massen could make a success of a demonstration at sea. The two got along famously and Massen suggested a trial in a couple of days. Meanwhile, in a public demonstration, Mariadas patiently taught the Senegalese fishermen how to set and mend the nets. He also made two additional sets.

On 20 May Massen brought a pirogue, which he commanded, with his son handling the engine and a small

boy as helper. When the net was being loaded, Massen doubted aloud whether such a light net would ever reach the bottom of the sea.

After a difficult and uncomfortable navigation across breakers and surf, with waves about 3 metres high, the net was set. Mariadas showed how to attach the buoys and the anchors.

When it was lifted after 45 minutes, Massen appeared happy, for the net had apparently set properly at a depth of 24 fathoms, catching some commercially valuable fish like ribbon fish, which pointed to the likely presence of prawns. The Senegalese were impressed with the reliability of the net and the performance of the Indian team which withstood the rough sea conditions.

During the post-trial evaluation, the Senegalese commented on the absence of prawns. The Indians, however, felt that the trammel net had demonstrated how it was possible to catch a large quantity of fish in a shod time. The team was confident about its successful adaptation by the Senegalese fishworkers. They further felt that the pace of adaptation could be enhanced through adequate post-harvest facilities like the supply of deep freezers and ice.

Ultimately, despite the four-fold translation barrier—Tamil, English, French and Wolof—the exchange programme was useful. It was a good example of ICSFs commitment to a South-South interface, which facilitates dialogue among traditional fisherfolk of different nations who share a means of livelihood and a common concern for fisheries. ■