

Fisheries Education in China

Historical Review

The history of fisheries education in China can be traced back to the turn of the century, when a famous scholar and industrialist, Zhang Quian, submitted to the Governor of Jiangsu Province and the Minister of Commerce in 1904 a proposal to start a fishing corporation. This was approved and the Jiang-Zhe Fisheries Company was set up at Wusong township, by the confluence of the Yangtze and Huangpu Rivers. That same year, two vocational schools were founded: a maritime school, and a fisheries school—the very first in China. But since the schools were intended mainly to supply workers for the company, their enrollment was very limited, and training was only on an elementary level.

Two years later, the Zhili Fishery Company was put up in the northern province of Tianjin. Being short of qualified personnel to manage modern fisheries, the company sent several investigation groups to Europe and Japan. They returned to Tianjin in 1911 and founded the Study and Training School of Fisheries.

In 1912 the Jiangsu Provincial Fishery School was established at Wusong in the south, and the Study and Training School of Fisheries in Tianjin was upgraded and renamed Zhili Provincial Senior Vocational Fishery School. These two were the earliest full-time regular schools (of specialized middle education) under the auspices of provincial governments, no longer affiliated with any enterprise.

In 1929, with the development of the deep sea fishery industry, two schools were upgraded from institutions of

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middle education into higher educational organizations. A two-year collegiate speciality of deep-sea fishery was established in the Jiangsu Provincial Fishery School. Meanwhile, the Zhili Provincial Senior Vocational Fishery School in Tianjin became the Hebei Provincial Fisheries School.

During the quarter-century before the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945), fisheries education in China enjoyed fairly rapid progress. Various middle technical schools emerged along every coastal province. Besides, junior fishery schools and other training classes for fishermen were started in many towns in the early 1930s. However, during the wartime years none of the fishery schools was spared from damage.

The end of the Second World War brought on the second historical era of fisheries education. During the period 1945-1949, fishery schools were rebuilt successively in several places; others were restored at their former campuses. By 1949, there were two professional fisheries schools and five senior vocational fisheries schools in the country, with total enrollment of about 1,000.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 brought about great achievements on all fronts.

After the country's rehabilitation, the annual yield of fishery in 1952 tripled that of 1949. Life became stable and had greater demands on the economy and on education. During the nationwide readjustment of all universities and their departments in 1952, the first national higher educational institution was established. It was named Shanghai Fisheries College (recently renamed Shanghai Fisheries University).

Fisheries Education Today

Right now, a university and four colleges of fisheries are situated in Shanghai, Dalian, Zhanjiang, Xiamen and Zhoushan. Three colleges have fisheries departments, namely: Shandong Oceanography College, Central China Agriculture College and Tianjin Agriculture College. The areas of Speciality vary from one college or university to another. In most cases, a baccalaureate (B.F.S. or B.F.E.) degree is earned in four years. However, two-year senior-collegiate programs, as well, were also recently started in order to train more technicians in shorter periods. A total of 5,000 are now undertaking higher education in fisheries.

There are 15 middle fisheries technical schools in China under the auspices of provincial or municipal governments, with total enrollment of about 7,000. They admit graduates of junior middle schools and give them three-year practical training besides basic scientific education.

Developed a few years ago, adult education in fisheries now covers several categories: fishery cadre training courses, evening schools, correspondence courses, and broadcast or television programs.

Prospects

A nationwide reformation of the educational system is now in full swing. The number of middle technical schools is predicted to greatly increase, so as to gradually rationalize the personnel ratio of different grades. The number of colleges or universities may not sharply increase, but enrollment will certainly expand before long. Some agriculture colleges are going to set up more departments of fisheries, especially for inland provinces.

