

Programme 5: Working for a living

Summary:

Everyone must work for a living for there is little or no support from the state. Many goods are handmade in small scale businesses such as clothing manufacture, bike repairs, recycling of car parts, restaurants, tea stalls, etc. These contrast with medium-scale operations, such as a small boatyard and factories.

Key questions:

- What do people do for a living in Kochi?
- Which jobs are the same in the UK and which are different?
- How do the jobs link together?
- What do people feel about their jobs?
- What affects the success of these businesses?

Learning objectives:

The programme aims for pupils to:

- explore the huge variety of occupations in such a busy city
- spot some of the similarities and differences between jobs in the UK and India
- introduce some of the unfamiliar ways in which people earn a living in Kochi
- begin to recognise the complex web of interrelationships supporting economic life
- introduce fishing as a significant local occupation

Learning outcomes:

The pupils will have:

- an understanding of some key features that characterise jobs and industry in a less economically developed country

Before the programme:

- Share the key questions and learning objectives for the lesson
- Introduce key vocabulary:
 - **Primary industry** (work to do with extracting materials from the environment, such as fishing, farming or forestry)
 - **Secondary industry** (making things from these and other raw materials)
 - **Tertiary industry** (selling goods and services)
 - **Monsoon** (annual wind that brings very heavy rains once or twice a year in the Indian sub continent)
 - **Chai or chaia** (tea)
 - **Storm barrier** (concrete or stone wall to protect the land against storms from the sea.)
- Start with some recap of the sorts of jobs that pupils will have heard about in the series already, especially the retailing sector of the city's economy that features in Programme 4. Highlight that these are nearly all jobs where people sell goods or services. They are not usually to do with making things from raw materials.

Programme support:

The programme begins on Palance Road in Mattancherry – a typically bustling street full of traders and stalls. Ajay speaks to:

- a man who irons clothes (his working day starts at 8 am and finishes at 9.30 pm and he works 7 days a week)
- an old man who pushes a mobile stall selling lemons (his work is quite physical but he is aged 71)
- a tailor (new clothes are an important consideration for each new festival)
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Key points are that most (visible) work is undertaken by men; the working day and working week can be very long; conditions are often hard; often even the old must work; the pay is often very modest.

Next Ajay visits a small boat yard on Vypin Island. Note how the scale of production is relatively small, though it involves quite a lot of workers (i.e. the work is labour intensive). The workers are not paid very much, by standards in more economically developed countries; but this must be seen in the context of lower living costs. Notice also, the use of local and, sometimes, recycled materials and local markets for the goods. The goods themselves might seem quite cheap when compared to similar goods in the UK. Power sources are not always reliable and they tend to be small scale too.

The interviews provide a good opportunity to discover the attitudes and feelings of the workers and owners to their jobs and their industries. This can be compared with the feelings of Shezad, Aziz and others who work in the primary industry of fishing that is introduced in the first part of the story, *Monsoon*.

The story focuses on one of the key primary industries in Kochi – fishing. The two main characters are Shezad and his father Aziz. They make a living fishing in Kochi's harbour using a lightweight canoe. However, on occasions they make the potentially hazardous journey further out to sea in search of better fishing.

The Chinese Fishermen of Cochin:

On the beach at Fort Cochin are the fishermen,
The fishermen who have worked for generations.

A warm soft breeze is blowing
As the sun rises over their shoulders.
All day long the men cast their nets
All day long the men heave their nets.

And as they work patiently the dolphins
Are playing, the Arabian Sea is swaying
The great nets hovering like butterflies
The great nets fluttering like butterflies.

While out in the deep water, a noisy trawler
Passes. Without thought it passes
The fishermen with their old ways, as the sun is sinking.
The fishermen with their old ways, as the sun is sinking.

Ivan Jones

The fishermen on the Chinese Fishing nets work a shift pattern, so that the nets are in more or less constant operation. The nets do not belong to the fishermen: they pay rent to the owner and then split between themselves the money they make from the sale of fish.

Activities:

Pause the programme when invited to do so to undertake the suggested activities, which include:

- Discuss with the group the lives of the workers that Ajay talks to; contrast this with what is known about working lives in the vicinity of the school.
- Write a diary entry for someone undertaking one of the work activities heard about during the programme.

After the programme:

- Ask the pupils to locate where Shezad's canoe was launched, the Chinese nets, the channel between Fort Cochin, Vypin Island and the open sea. You can use this map: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdf/ferrymap2.pdf>
- In the plenary, get some of the children to read out their diary entries and ask the others to comment on how realistic they think it might be.