



A STUDY ON WOMEN FISHER VENDORS AND THEIR PROBLEMS

Dr. Beulah Jayarani C.¹ and Caroline Jeba Sorna P.²

¹Assistant Professor of Bioscience, Loyola College of Education, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

²Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Stella Matutina College of Education, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

ABSTRACT :

Aquaculture as an industry is of very recent origin and is yet to involve women in any significant manner. With the meteoric growth of women's education in the country in recent decades, women have started entering all walks of life, including the various fisheries sectors, such as research, development, training, extension and industry, and have already made their presence felt. However, even though the integration of women in the fisheries mainstream is already on the move, there is still ample scope for further substantial growth. Women are almost half the adult population. They contribute two third of the worlds working hours and yet earn only 1% of the worlds property. In developing countries the reality of most women is that they are compelled by poverty to seek and income, either as the sole earner of the family or to supplement income of the family. Traditionally, fishing was the subsistence occupation of certain communities in Tamil Nadu. These fishing communities operated with conventional technology in their occupation. By the mid-sixties, however, modern technology based on western models was superimposed upon the existing technology by the state, ignoring the possible impact of such a change on the socio-economics of the fishing communities. Predictably this modernization model did not in any way bring the artisanal fishermen any benefit. On the contrary, their share of the returns declined. This paper looks at some of the women fisher vendors and their problems in Pazhaverkadu.



KEYWORDS : *Aquaculture , modern technology based , socio-economics.*

INTRODUCTION

Fishing has been one of the oldest economic activities of human race. It comes next to agriculture. Fish and other sea food constitute an integral part of a wholesome food provision. Fishing has been a traditional occupation for a sizable section of the population. The economic conditions of these fishermen mainly depend on the fish catches. Fisheries development is essential, both as a means of improving food production and as a means of improving the quality of diet in most of developing countries. As a source of protein, vitamins and essential minerals, fish provides an ideal supplement to the inhabitants of many. There are varieties of fishes and they are classified according to the shape and size. Fishing is not a mode of earning regularly throughout the year. Due to the natural calamities and government bans it is stopped for a certain period. During this period, the people go to neighboring state for fishing or they involve in fishing related activities such as net repair etc., Fish marketing is done on a high level during the seasons. In the off season, the fishermen suffer a lot to meet their personal and family expenses. Fishermen also save during seasons and they are able to overcome the difficulties for the rest of the year. Traditionally, women have been entrusted with the roles of

housekeeping, reproductive activities and care giving, maintaining social cohesion in the community, and supplementing the family's income by working inside or outside fisheries. Women play important and varied roles in the post-harvest sector. They work as auctioneers, traders, vendors, suppliers to hotels, processors and wage laborers in export companies. Women have always played an important role in the fishing industry by way of taking care of many of the shore-based activities, after the fish is landed. These include handling of the fish, salting, drying and marketing, apart from hand braiding of nets.

REVIEW

Kalawar (1981) examined the living conditions of fishermen in Maharashtra. According to him, the living conditions on the whole are deplorable. Owing to lack of economic development in this region, there is continuous exodus of labour from the coastal region. As a result, the females have to bear most of the burden of economic activity. Indebtedness in the fishermen community is widespread. Necessary infrastructure by way of communication and transport facilities, water supply and power should have to be provided on priority basis. This creates scope for setting up agro-based and fisheries-based industries.

Veenakumari (1998) explains the socio-economic status of women in India. The status of women is intimately connected with their economic position, which depends upon the opportunities for participation in economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as an indicator of the society's stage of development. Overwhelming majority of women are engaged in the informal sector, which not only provides low return but also is characterized by return in accessibilities to credit, technology, training and other facilities. Women have still not been recognized as producers of their own right. Moreover the traditional economic activities which provide employment to women have suffered in the competition with the more advanced technologies. There are about 30 per cent rural households headed by women who bear all the burden of earning and caring for the families and suffer on account of lack of access to means of production and ownership of land and other property.

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To analyze the demographic profile of the sample respondents.
- ❖ To examine the income and borrowing pattern of women fish vendors in Pazhaverkadu.

METHODOLOGY

The required information for the study has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been collected from the respondents by survey method through the issue of questionnaire in addition interview technique and informal talks were held for collecting firsthand information. The secondary data has been collected from books, magazines, journals.

LIMITATIONS

1. Sample restricted to 110 for women fish vendors in Pazhaverkadu due to particular city of time.
2. Only women fish vendors in Pazhaverkadu market are targeted here.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Sample Respondents

Age Level	No. of Women	Marital Status			Educational Status		Family Type		House Status		Health Condition	
		Married	Unmarried	Widow	Educated	Uneducated	Nuclear	Joint	Own	Rented	Healthy	Often Fall Sick
18-20	10	4	5	1	7	3	6	4	4	6	8	2
20-25	12	9	2	1	8	4	7	5	5	7	6	6
25-30	20	16	1	3	6	14	15	5	7	13	8	12
30-35	23	18	-	5	7	16	17	6	8	15	8	15
35-40	15	11	-	4	5	10	8	7	5	10	7	8
40-45	18	14	-	4	4	14	9	9	7	11	7	11
45-50	12	9	-	3	3	9	6	6	5	7	5	7
TOTAL	110	81	8	21	40	70	68	42	41	69	49	61

From Table-1,

- 10.90% of women respondents belong to the age group of 45-50 years, 16.36% belongs to 40-45 years, 13.63% belong to 35-40 years, 20.90% belongs to 30-35 years, 18.18% of women belong to age group of 25-30, 10.90% of women belong to age group of 20-25 and 9.09% women belong to age group of 18-20.
- 73.63% of the women respondents are married, 7.27% of women are unmarried and 19.09% of women are widowed and divorced.
- Educational status of women, 63.63% are uneducated and 36.36% are educated respondents.
- 61.81% majority of women is living in nuclear family type and 38.18% of staying in joint family type.
- This table shows that 62.72% of women's in Pazhaverkadu are living in rented house and 37.27% are living in own house.
- The above table reveals that only 44.54% of Pazhaverkadu women are healthy but 55.45% women are unhealthy.

Table 2: INDEBTEDNESS, AMOUNT, SOURCE OF DEBT

INDEBTEDNESS STATUS	FREQ	%	AMOUNT OF DEBT	FREQ	%	SOURCE OF DEBT
Yes	88	80	<10,000	24	21.81	Relative
No	22	20	10,000-50,000	30	27.27	Friends
			50,000-1,00,000	24	21.81	Bank
			1,00,001-1,50,000	32	29.09	Money lender

Table-2 shows that 80% of women fish vendor have indebtedness and 20% of women have no debt. It also shows that 21.81% of women debt amount is less than 10,000 from relatives, 27.27% of women debt amount is 10,000-50,000 from friends, 21.81% of women debt amount is 50,000 - 1,00,000 from bank and 29.09% of women debt amount is 1,00,000-1,50,000 from money lender.

Table 3: PURPOSE OF DEBT

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Marriage	28	25.45
Education	15	13.63
Illness	37	33.63
Daily needs	30	27.27

Table-3 depicts that 27.27% women have debt for their daily needs, 25.45% of them have borrowed for the purpose of marriage, 13.63% of debt for education of their children, 20% of women has no debts, and 33.63% of women have debt as they have borrowed for meeting medicinal expenses.

Table 4: t-test showing the Amount of Debt and Purpose of Debt of Women Fish Vendors

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Amount Of Debt	88	2.92	1.111	.124
Purpose Of Debt	88	2.98	1.423	.159

One-Sample Test						
Test Value = 0						
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Amount Of Debt	23.543	79	.000	2.925	2.68	3.17
Purpose Of Debt	18.701	79	.000	2.975	2.66	3.29

H₀: There is no association between amount of debt and purpose of debt

H₁: There is association between amount of debt and purpose of debt

From Table-4, since the P-value (0.000) is less than the 0.01, it can be interpreted that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted at 1% level of significance and therefore it is concluded that significant mean difference between amount of debt and purpose of debt.

FINDINGS

ISSUES OF WOMEN FISH VENDORS

The nature of the product handled by women fish vendors causes a certain stigma that fishermen themselves do not generally face. Unlike men, whose labour is largely confined to the sea, river or lake, fish vendors have to travel with their product to market places. They have to interact with the public and the law. In the process, they are often forced to deal with inbred prejudices and problems of various kinds. The following are some of the key problems they face:

- **Distances and lack of basic facilities at harbors and landing centres:** With greater mechanization and motorization, harbors and fish landing centres have become more centralized. Women vendors thus have to travel long distances to access fish. This may even mean staying overnight at harbors and landing centres, in order to be present for the early morning fish landing and auctions. Transportation to landing sites/harbors is sometimes unreliable, and basic facilities (toilets, storage, lights, waiting areas, night shelters) are absent. Under these circumstances, women often find themselves vulnerable to sexual abuse and harassment.
- **Poor access to credit, exorbitant interest rates:** Technology-induced changes to the nature of fishing operations have also meant larger catches. Women, with poor access to credit and capital,

are rarely able to compete with large-scale traders, and commission and export agents. To be able to access fish even in small quantities, they have to procure credit from middlemen and moneylenders, often at exorbitant rates of interest.

- **Lack of public transport to markets:** While a few women sell the fish at the landing centre or harbor itself, for the rest, the next major challenge after procurement is to transport the fish to the market place. As the distances involved may be considerable, women need to use some form of transport. In many situations, vendors are usually denied access to public transport, given the nature of the product they are dealing with. This means hiring auto rickshaws, or other forms of transport, a significant expense in it. Male fish vendors, with access to their own transport, are at a comparative advantage.
- **Lack of ice and proper storage facilities:** Fish is a highly perishable commodity, and if vendors are to prevent spoilage and get a better price, they need to preserve the fish. They need access to ice and iceboxes. During the peak season, when ice is in short supply, it is often monopolized by large traders and intermediaries.
- **Problems at marketplaces:** At the market itself, vendors face other kinds of problems. Fish vending spaces are either not recognized or just do not exist. Vendors are often harassed into paying 'informal taxes' in order to continue vending fish at particular spot. With the absence of legitimate vending zones, those vending fish on city pavements and other areas are perceived as encroachers on public spaces. They are constantly harassed and threatened with eviction by the police and civic authorities.
- **Poor market infrastructure:** Where there are existing markets, basic facilities for storing, processing, and selling fish; clean toilets; access to potable running water; and adequate waste disposal measures are usually not available. Such facilities are essential for the hygienic handling of fish, for the health and wellbeing of vendors, for consumer health, and for enabling women to engage in their occupation in a dignified manner. Given the important role and contribution of women fish vendors, it is indeed unfortunate that the majority of them continue to struggle with such problems on a daily basis.

There are two reasons for the poverty of fishermen, namely the inequality in the asset holdings among them and secondly the exploitation of all of them by those who are involved in the process of buying what they produce. As a result for the average traditional fishermen, saving from his income for investment is a pain full task. Indebtedness among the fisher folk is high. Credit in the form of wage advances is a very common phenomenon in traditional fishing communities. Credit of other forms may be obtained by pledging ration cards, gold and fishing nets with individuals in the village who are not necessarily concerned with fishing. Rate of interest ranges from 24% to 60% for the mortgage of their products. Fish merchants are a source of big credit. They normally lend large amounts to fishermen who own fishing equipment's.

CONCLUSION

Women fish vendors play critical roles in a country like India, catering to the food security needs of a diverse range of consumers. Fish vending provides employment livelihood to lakhs of people, primarily women. Active steps need to be taken in an integrated manner, drawing on available policy and legislative frameworks by the state and central government, to support this important segment of the population.

REFERENCES

1. Status study of women fish vendors Published on April 10, 2013.
2. Naveen Machhali. 2015. Preliminary study on socio-economic status of fish vendors and market ... market performance and socio-economic status of wholesale vendors.
3. Study on knowledge of rural women about food grain.
4. Kalawar, A.G. 1981. Socio- Economic Conditions of the Coastal Rural Sector. CMFRI Bulletin, 30, 42-44.

5. Kurien, John. 1981. Socio-Economic Conditions of Traditional Fishermen. CMFRI Bulletin, 30, 35-53.
6. A study on socio economic status of women fish vendors with special reference to kasimedu market by M. Arathi.
7. Veenakumari. 1998. Socio-Economic Status of Women in India. Southern Economist, pp.3-6.
8. Choudhury, A.R. (2004). A study on Discrimination of Fisher folk in Kerala, FAO Study.
9. Jayraman, R. (2008). Performance Analysis of Fisherwomen Self-Help Groups (Tamil Nadu J. Vet. Anim. Sci., 41: 2.
10. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/11-lifestylediseases-11-you-should-take-seriously/articleshow/16419598.cms>
11. www.shodhganga.com
12. www.medindia.net › Lifestyle and Wellness