



A STUDY ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN FISH VENDORS AND THE LEVEL OF THEIR SALES FISHES IN THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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Abstract

The women fish vendors of the artisanal fisheries belong to one of the poorest groups in the coastal rural areas. They are in all fronts affected by many socio-economic factors, which determine the degree of their labour participation. This in turn decides their economic status. Thus, there seems to be a vicious circle in the coastal region. Fishing and fishery related activities require much of physical labour and the fisherwomen are almost involved in all fishery related activities in the study area. They contribute significantly towards the development of marine fishery sector and towards their family income. But still, they remain backward. Therefore, the society and the government should take measures to remove these obstacles, which affect the life of the women fish vendors especially during the ban period.

Further, the primary data results evidently show that the 45 days ban period change the income level of the women fish vendors. Thus, the socio and infrastructural facilities have also been developed in the coastal villages to a greater extent and to the growth of the country.

Thoothukudi district, an industrially forwarded and a leading maritime district of the State of Tamil Nadu, having a longest coastline with nearly 1,20,000 people depending on marine fisheries. The socio-economic conditions of fisher folk are generally low. In this context, the traditional fishermen and fisherwomen are encouraged through suitable policy measures to adopt the latest technologies and strategies in production and marketing in the fisheries sector. The magnitude of the backwardness can be minimised by empowering the fisher folk especially the women fish vendor through planned interventions by strategic and practical means through the initiatives of the government and the society. It is also suggested that the schemes like Sethu Samuthuram Canal Project

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take care of the welfare of the fisher community. This will go a long way to improve not only the socio-economic conditions of the fisher folk but can also give a face lift for the district.

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Introduction

Women's issues loomed large on social and political agenda in the 1960's and entered the development agenda in the late 1960's and 1970's when several international aid agencies recognized that the failure of many of their development projects was due to the exclusion of women in the design and implementation of the projects.

Even though women play important roles; their contribution to the society has often been undervalued and unappreciated. All over the world, women contribute in multiple ways to the production, processing, marketing and management of fish and other living aquatic resources.

The sea is a good supplier of food. Fish is an important diet for millions of people through out the world. The term fishing refers to the landing of all types of marine and fresh water fauna. Fish is the most significant resource of the sea and fishing is one of the most familiar economic activities associated with the sea.

Women play an all-important role in the marine fishery by involving in harvesting, processing and marketing of fish. Though the role of fish harvesting at sea is restricted, activities like pulling of beach – seines and picking of shells/cockles are sometimes undertaken by women. The survey indicates that in 10 per cent of the villages, women do get involved in fishing. Women's involvement in fish processing and marketing is more obvious. Women in 78 per cent of the villages are involved in processing activities and in 71 per cent of the villages they undertake marketing of fish.

Scope of the Study

The present study is confined to highlight the socio-economic conditions of the women fish vendors. The approach of the study is based on the viewpoint of women fish vendors who act as shop women fish vendors, station women fish vendors

and mobile women fish vendors in Thoothukudi District.

Statement of the Problem

Women's role in fishing communities in the countries of India, Srilanka and Bangladesh is mostly confined to fish processing and fresh fish marketing on a small scale. Anthropological studies of fishing communities along the Thoothukudi coast Southern India relate how women fish vendor's communities have evolved systems of keeping women away from the primary occupation of fish sales of various social-conditioning systems. This has deprived them of the knowledge with respect to sales of fish strategy while fish processing is a female-dominated activity in the South Asian region, marketing of the processed product as well as selling of fresh fish is often seen as undesirable activities, usually a last resort for the poor family.

Women are the most undervalued and inappropriately utilised human resource in the developing world. With the global efforts, noticeable changes in the attitude of people towards using this un-utilised/ under-utilised human capacity have been seen in the last decade. In Indo-China countries women are active in the whole economy and particularly so in the fisheries sector. The result is that they are at the mercy of the middlemen.

A study entitled "Status of women fish vendors in Thoothukudi District, Thoothukudi" highlights the character of fishermen. It notes that the mechanization of fishing craft may be undertaken in a phased manner. The parity between input price and output price may be studied in depth and suitable price policy should be formulated. It also suggests that by extending organized financial aids to all fishermen the status of fishermen could be improved.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of the women fish vendors in Thoothukudi district.
2. To analyse the relationship between the socio



o- economic condition of the women fish vendors and their level of sales in the study area and

3. To offer suitable suggestions based on the findings of the study.

Hypothesis of the Study

The null hypothesis has been formulated and given below;

There is no relationship between the socio-economic background variables of the women fish vendors and the level of sale of fishes in Thoothukudi district.

Limitation of the Study

The accuracy of both the primary and secondary data, which are used in this study, depends upon the concerned materials and response. The result found in the present study may not always match for every year due to the many changes in every human activity particularly in women fish vendors. As

the present study has been undertaken particularly in Thoothukudi district, it cannot be generalised for all social regions of the whole country.

Methodology

Designing a suitable methodology and selection of analytical tools are important for meaningful analysis of any research problem. This section is devoted to a description of the methodology.

Sampling Procedure

Thoothukudi district comprises eight taluks. For the purpose of collection of primary data, taluk-wise lists of women fish vendors were obtained from the Thoothukudi district with help of Non-Governmental Organisations. Three per cent of the women fish vendors were concentrated in all taluks. 120 sample women fish vendors randomly selected from the below mentioned taluks by proportionately. These sample women fish vendors in each taluk are represented in table 1.1

Table 1.1: Name of Taluks and Sample Women Fish Vendors in Thoothukudi District

S.No	Name of Taluks	Number of Women Fish Vendors	Sample
1.	Thoothukudi	992	30
2.	Tiruchendur	900	27
3.	Ottapidaram	366	11
4.	Ettayapuram	431	13
5.	Kovilpatti	384	12
6.	Srivaikundam	316	9
7.	Sathankulam	309	9
8.	Vilathikulam	296	9
	Total	3994	120

Source: Survey data.

Period of Study

The field survey was conducted from January 2022- November 2022 for the collection of primary data. The reference period of survey was 2022.

Collection of Data

The study is an analytical one and comprises

both primary and secondary data. These secondary data are collected from publications, journals and magazines.

On the basis of the information gathered a well-designed pre-tested interview schedule was drafted and used in the field survey to collect primary data.

ANALYSIS

TABLE 1 Level of Sale of fishes of the Women fish vendors

Sl.No.	Level of Sale of fishes	Number of women fish vendors	Percentage
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1.	High	42	35.00
2.	Medium	57	50.00
3.	Low	21	50.00
	Total	120	100.00

Source:Surveydata

Note:Figuresinbracketsrepresentthepercentage tototal.

Data Presented in Table 1 show that out of 120 women fish vendors, 42 (35.00 per cent)women fish vendors come under the category of high level of Sale of fishes, 57 (47.50 per cent)women fish vendors come

under the category of medium level of Sale of fishes and remaining 21(17.50per cent) womenfish vendors come under thecategoryoflow level of Sale offishes.

TABLE 2Ageof theWomenfish vendorsandLevelofSaleoffishes

Sl. No.	Age (inyears)	Level ofSale ofFishes			Total
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	Below 30	9 (21.43)	12 (21.06)	2 (9.52)	23 (19.17)
2.	30-40	11 (26.19)	14 (24.56)	5 (21.81)	30 (25.00)
3.	40-50	19 (45.24)	21 (36.84)	10 (47.62)	50 (41.67)
4.	50and above	3 (7.14)	10 (17.54)	4 (19.05)	17 (14.16)
	Total	42 (100.00)	57 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	120 (100.00)

Source:Surveydate

Note:Figuresinbracketsrepresentthepercentage tototal.

The above Table 2 shows that out of 42 women fish vendors with high level of Sale of fishes, amajority of 19 (45.24 per cent) of the women fish vendors come under the age group between 40-

50yearsfollowedby11(26.19percent),9(21.43per cent)and3(7.14percent)ofthewomenfishvenders come under the age group between 30-40 years, below 30 years and 50 years and aboverespectively.

TABLE3EducationalQualification of theWomenfishvendors andSaleoffishes

Sl. No.	EducationalQualification	Numberofwomenfishvendors			Total
		Levelof saleoffishes			
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	PrimaryLevel	20 (47.62)	25 (43.86)	12 (57.14)	57 (47.50)
2.	SecondaryLevel	14 (33.33)	22 (38.60)	8 (38.10)	44 (36.67)
3.	Highersecondary	8 (19.05)	10 (17.54)	1 (4.76)	19 (15.83)



Total	42 (100.00)	57 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	120 (100.00)
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Source:Surveydata

Note:Figuresinbrackets representthepcentage tototal

Table 3 shows that out of 42women fish vendors with high level of Sale of fishes, amaximumof20(47.62percent)womenfishvendorsstudiedprimaryschoolleveleducationfollo

wed by 14 (33.33 per cent) and remaining 8 (19.05 per cent)women fish vendors are studiedsecondaryand higher secondaryschool levelrespectively.

TABLE4 Religionof theWomenfish vendors andLevelofSaleoffishes

Sl. No.	Religion	Numberofwomenfishvendors			Total
		Levelofsaleoffishes			
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	Hindu	33 (78.57)	44 (77.19)	18 (85.71)	95 (79.17)
2.	Christian	78 (16.67)	9 (15.79)	2 (9.52)	18 (15.00)
3.	Muslim	2 (4.76)	4 (7.02)	1 (4.77)	7 (5.83)
	Total	42 (100.00)	57 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	120 (100.00)

Source:Surveydata

Note:Figuresin bracketsrepresentsthepercentagetototal.

It is observed from the above Table 4 that out of 42women fish vendors with high level ofSale of fishes 33 (78.57 per cent)women fish vendors are Hindus followed by 7 (16.67 per cent) and2(4.76 percent) women fish vendors are Christians and Muslims respectively.

In the case of 57 women fish vendors with medium level of Sale of fishes, 44 (77.19 per cent)women fish vendors are Hindus followed by 9 (15.79 per cent) and rest of 4 (7.02 per cent) women fish vendors are Christians and Muslims respectively.

TABLE5 Communityof theWomenfish vendors andLevelof Saleoffishes

Sl. No.	Community	Numberofwomenfishvendors			Total
		Levelofsaleoffishes			
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	BackwardClass (BC)	22 (52.38)	34 (59.65)	13 (61.90)	69 (57.50)
2.	Most Backward Class(MBC)	15 (35.71)	17 (29.82)	5 (23.81)	37 (30.83)
3.	Schedules Caste /Schedule Tribes (SC/ST).	5 (11.91)	6 (10.53)	3 (14.29)	14 (11.67)
	Total	42 (100.00)	57 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	120 (100.00)

Source:Surveydata

Note:Figuresinbracketsrepresentthepcentage tototal

Table 5 reveals that out of 42 women fish vendors with high level of Sale of fishes,



maximum 22 (52.38 per cent) women fish vendors belong to Backward Class (BC) followed by 15 (35.71 percent) and 5 (11.91 per cent) women fish vendors belong to Most

Backward Class (MBC) and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) respectively.

TABLE 6 Monthly Income of the Women fish vendors and Level of Sale of fishes

Sl. No.	Monthly Income (in Rs.)	Number of women fish vendors			Total
		Level of sale of fishes			
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	Below Rs.15000	8 (19.05)	13 (22.81)	4 (19.05)	25 (20.83)
2.	Rs.15000-30000	17 (40.48)	20 (35.09)	8 (38.09)	45 (37.50)
3.	Rs.30000-45000	10 (23.80)	15 (26.32)	6 (28.57)	31 (25.84)
4.	Rs.45000 and above	7 (16.67)	9 (15.78)	3 (14.29)	19 (15.83)
	Total	42 (100.00)	57 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	120 (100.00)

Source: Survey data

Note: Figures in brackets represent the percentage to total.

It can be seen from the Table 6 that the out of 42 women fish vendors with high level of Sale of fishes 17 (40.48 percent) of the women fish vendors are earning monthly income between Rs. 15000-30000 followed by 10 (23.80 per cent) of the women fish vendors with monthly

income between Rs.30000-45000, 8 (19.05 per cent) of the women fish vendors are earning monthly income of Rs.45000 and above and rest of 7 (16.67 per cent) of the women fish vendors are earning monthly income below Rs.15000.

TABLE 7 Monthly Family Expenditure of the Women fish vendors and Level of Sale of fishes

Sl. No.	Monthly Family Expenditure (in Rs)	Number of women fish vendors			Total
		Level of Sale of fishes			
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	Below Rs.20000	3 (7.14)	5 (8.76)	2 (9.52)	10 (8.33)
2.	Rs.20000-40000	6 (14.29)	8 (14.04)	5 (23.81)	19 (15.83)
3.	Rs.40000-60000	29 (69.05)	38 (66.67)	10 (47.62)	77 (64.17)
4.	Rs.60000 and above	4 (9.52)	6 (10.53)	4 (19.05)	14 (11.67)
	Total	42 (100.00)	57 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	120 (100.00)

Source: Survey data

Note: Figures in brackets represent the percentage to total.

Table 7 indicates that out of 42 women fish vendors with high level of Sale of fishes, a maximum of 29 (69.05 per cent) of the women fish vendors spend between

Rs.40000-60000 per month on family expenditure. In the case of medium level of Sale of fishes out of 57 women fish vendors, a majority 66.67 per cent of the women fish



vendors spent between Rs.40000-60000 permonthon familyexpenditure.

TABLE8 Monthly Family Savings of the Women fish vendors and Level of Sale offishes

Sl. No.	Monthly Family Savings (inRs)	Number of women fish vendors			Total
		Level of Sale offishes			
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	No Savings	5 (11.90)	7 (12.28)	3 (14.28)	15 (12.50)
2.	Below 5000	6 (14.29)	9 (15.79)	5 (23.81)	20 (16.67)
3.	5000-10000	20 (47.62)	28 (49.12)	9 (42.86)	57 (47.50)
4.	10000 and above	11 (26.19)	13 (22.81)	4 (19.05)	28 (23.33)
	Total	42 (100.100)	57 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	120 (100.00)

Source: Survey data

Note: Figures in bracket represent the percentage to total.

It is observed from Table 8 that out of 42 women fish vendors with high level of Sale offishes, a maximum of 47.62 per cent of the women fish vendors have monthly family savings between Rs.5000-10000.

In the case of medium level of Sale offishes out of 57 women fish vendors, a majority of the 49.12 per cent of the women fish vendors have monthly family savings between Rs.5000-10000.

TABLE9 Family Debt of the Women fish vendors and Level of Sale offishes

Sl. No.	Family Debt (inRs)	Number of women fish vendors			Total
		Level of Sale offishes			
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	Below 2 lakh	1 (20.00)	1 (14.29)	-	2 (13.33)
2.	2-4 lakhs	1 (20.00)	2 (28.57)	1 (33.33)	4 (26.67)
3.	4 lakhs and above	3 (60.00)	4 (57.14)	2 (66.67)	9 (60.00)
	Total	5 (100.100)	7 (100.00)	3 (100.00)	15 (100.00)

Source: Survey data

Note: Figures in brackets represent the percentage to total.

It is understood from the above Table 9 understood that out of 5 women fish vendors with high level of Sale of fishes, maximum each 20.00 per cent of the women fish vendors are having family indebtedness between Rs 2-5 lakhs.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study shows that the women fish vendors who mostly fall under the age group between 40-50 years which constituted 41.67 per cent, 25 per cent, 19.17 per cent and 14.16 per cent of the women fish vendors

come under the age group between 40-50 years which is highest in high, medium and low level of Sale offishes.

It is found that a majority of 47.50 percent of the women fish vendors studied primary school level of education.

About 79.17 per cent of the women fish vendors are from Hindu religion followed by Christians and Muslims in high, medium and low level of sale offishes.

About 57.50 percent of the women fish vendors are belong to Backward Class (BC) followed by 30.83 per cent of the women fish vendors



are belong to Most Backward Class(MBC)and11.67 Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribes(SC/ST) in the study area in all level of sale offishes.

Nearly 38 per cent of the women fish vendors have monthly income between Rs.15000-30000.

It is observed that 65.83 per cent of the women fish vendors have monthly family income between Rs.50000 to 70000.

In the case of monthly family expenditure of the women fish vendors nearly 64.17 per cent have monthly family expenditure between Rs.40000 to Rs 60000 followed by 15.83 per cent of the women fish vendors with monthly family expenditure between Rs.20000 -Rs 40000.

It is clearly observed that 47.50 per cent of the women fish vendors have monthly family savings between Rs.5000-10000 followed by 23.33 per cent of the women fish vendors have monthly family savings Rs.10000 and above. In the case of family debt of the women fish vendors 60.00 per cent of the women fish vendors have indebtedness Rs.4 lakhs and above followed by 28.67 per cent of the women fish vendors have family indebtedness between Rs.2-4 lakhs in high, medium and low level of sale offishes.

SUGGESTIONS

In order to overcome the problems faced by the women fish vendors the following measures are recommended.

It is understood from the analysis that inadequate market demand is the major problem confronted by the women fish vendors. Sales problem includes inadequate sales demand, fluctuations in demand and competition from large industrial units. In order to solve this problem, it is suggested that the Government should be implemented. As far as possible, the large units must be discouraged from competing with women fish vendors.

To solve the working capital problem, the present financing must be streamlined by implementing the announced single widow system to help the women fish vendors to have the funds from beginning.

Women fish vendors should be encouraged at gross rate level to promote the

employment opportunities in rural, semi urban and urban areas.

Institutional finance to women fish vendors is very essential for its establishment and existence. Hence, the banks and financial institutions must encourage the women fish vendors among the educated young mind through various sales strategy awareness programme.

Government should take a serious step to promote the self-employment habit among the educated people.

Process of granting loans must be simplified the process of availing loans requires a huge amount of paperwork of it.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it may be concluded from the findings that employment generation, total investment made and sales of fishes had been increased tremendously in Thoothukudi District. The main problems faced by women fish vendors was in sales their fishes and getting adequate working capital.

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