



COMMON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF FISHERMEN

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Abstract

The Indian fisheries sector is a significant contributor to the economy, providing livelihoods to 14.49 million people and contributing significantly to the country's economy. India is the second largest fish-producing nation globally, with a total fish production of 18.06 million tons in 2016-17. However, the socio-economic conditions of fishermen in India are low, with poor housing, lack of education, and inadequate sanitation facilities. These conditions lead to health issues and the need for borrowing credits to meet basic needs. Tamil Nadu, major coastal state, traditional fish workers face similar socio-economic conditions, living in poverty and belonging to religious groups like Hindus, Christians, and Muslims.

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Introduction

The fishing sector is one of the most profitable sectors in the Indian agriculture sector. The fishing sector is considered a major source of income and employment for the rural poor and has encouraged the development of many industries. Apart from that, it is a source of cheap food, a source of food and a source of income for the country. About 14.49 million people are employed in the fishing sector which provides livelihood and contributes significantly to the Indian economy. India is the second largest fish producer in the world. India is also the largest producer of farmed fish, the second

in the world after China. India's total fishery production in 2016-17 was 18.06 million tonnes (MT), of which 7,071 MT came from the land sector and 4.59 MT from the marine sector. The inland fisheries sector accounts for 62% of India's total fisheries. However, the socio-economic conditions of Indian fishermen are very low. They lack education and live in poverty. They often live on low-lying, overcrowded and unsanitary grounds, which pose health problems for Indian fishermen. Due to low family income and lack of basic facilities at home, the need to support many family members forces fishermen to take loans to



meet their needs. Tamil Nadu is one of the major coastal states of India. Fishermen in Tamil Nadu have similar socio-economic status. The standard of living of traditional fish workers in Tamil Nadu is very low. Socially they belonged to one of the most depressed classes in the state. Fishermen are members of traditional fishing groups who live in poverty. Their income and their land and their houses and their lives are miserable. Fishermen in Tamil Nadu come from three religious groups, mainly Hindus, Christians and Muslims. The social life and lifestyle of the three religious groups is similar. Their life depends on the fishing season, which determines their Ritual.

Fishing industry in Kanyakumari district

Kanyakumari district has 42 marine fishing villages with one active fishing harbour, three major fish landing centres and 39 minor fish landing centres. In Kanyakumari district as on 2011-12, marine fishermen have employed 46070 fishing crafts of which 10436 are traditional crafts; 24942 are motorized traditional crafts and 10692 are mechanized fishing boats. The production during the year 2011-12 has been at 42716.60 tonnes of which mechanized crafts account for 26868.74 tonnes, motorized crafts for 9436.10 tonnes and non-motorized crafts for 6411.76 tonnes. The inland fish production in Kanyakumari district is also very impressive. The total inland fresh water spread is 6984.10 ha. In 2010-12 the total quantity of inland fish produced is 4368.46 tonnes, the money value of which is 10.92 crores. Estuaries are part of this natural environment in Kanyakumari district. The estuaries and coastal waters are dynamic and are more productive because of the monsoon rains and enormous quantities of nutrients transported into the sea by floods. Several varieties of finfish, prawns, crabs, lobsters, stoma pods, clams, mussels and oysters of commercial significance have been identified in the Kanyakumari coastal environment, which provides good breeding grounds. Thus in Kanyakumari district, nearly 1000 ha of estuarine and brackish water environment is identified as potential fishery resources.

There are three important revering ecosystems which confluence with the Arabian Sea. They are

- Thengapattinam estuary, formed by the confluence of Tamirabarani River in between Thengapattinam and Eraiummanthurai.
- Valliyar estuary formed by the Valliyar River near Kadiapattinam
- Manakudy estuary formed by the confluence of River Pazhayar in between East Manakudy and West Manakudy villages.

There are two minor estuaries, they are (i) Pambar estuary near Colachel and (ii) Pantri estuary near Rajakkamangalam. Wedge bank is a fertile ground where rich marine biodiversity occurs. Wedge bank is defined as a selective marine region where there is rich availability of fish food organisms. Varieties of fish select from this region is used for feeding and breeding purposes. Throughout the maritime countries of the world there are about twenty such wedge banks. Of these, one is situated near Kanyakumari district extending east-ward and west-ward for about 30km. Since the coastline of this district spreads towards the west coast and east coast of the southern tip of our country, representative fishery resources of the three seas swarm around here. From time immemorial the local fishermen have understood the ecology, the feeding habits and the biology of fish breeding occurring in the Kanyakumari coastal areas.

About 220 species are available in this district, of them about 140 species are marine type and 80 species are fresh water type. In order to help sea going fishermen during night time, there are two light houses in the coastal region. One is situated at Kanyakumari and another at Muttom. It is said that the light source is visible to the extent of 20 km from the sea shore. The fishermen of Kanyakumari district mainly use the mechanized crafts of the types-Trawler, Purse-seiner, Gillnetter, Liner and Dolnetters; motorized and non-motorized crafts of type-Dugout canoes, Catamaran, Plank-built and Fibre glass boats. Mechanized

craft uses mechanical power / devices not only for propulsion but also for catching the fish. But motorized craft employs mechanical power for propulsion only. Kanyakumari district fishermen use the fishing gears of the types-Trawl nets, Gillnets, Trammel nets, Seine nets, Hooks and Lines and Bag nets.

Common problems

In most developing countries in Southeast Asia, small-scale fisheries dominate. However, the small-scale fisheries sector remains weak at low levels of the economy, maintaining the standard of living for millions of people. Other economies in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are making progress. This condition has little effect on most people. Economic development efforts have adversely affected the rural population. Singapore, for example, has developed the industry the fastest, with a clear impact on small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. Outside of Singapore, entire fishing villages have been destroyed by earthworks to build a new international airport. Another example is the current situation in Cebu City, Philippines. Pollution from distilleries, hog farms, slaughterhouses and shipyards around Kansaga Bay negatively affects small fisheries. The development of commercial fisheries is another threat to small-scale fisheries. In some cases there is a political crisis, such as in East Sumatra. The expansion of exclusive economic zones in countries such as Japan and Taiwan has increased competition for small-scale fishermen.

The growth of tourism has adversely affected the livelihoods of small-scale fishermen. Tourism development is high on the agenda of many Southeast Asian countries. Foreign tourists want to see white beaches, warm waters, rocks and other places. Therefore, hotels and beach resorts are mostly built in more remote areas. But these areas are home to small fishermen who are driven from their places by tourists and forced to stop fishing. For example, Sentosa Island near the city of Singapore. Until recently, most of

Singapore's small-scale fishermen lived and fished there. They were evacuated to make way for a large entertainment area with beaches, golf courses, swimming pools, restaurants and nightclubs. Saigon Island is a small part to the northeast of Panay Island in the Philippines. When a tourist company built a beach resort there, the existing fishing village was demolished because the company didn't want foreign tourists to see the plight of the fishermen there. It seems that education is a good tool for the development of a country. Formal education prepares people for careers in the new economy.

Small fish problems require different knowledge. Priority should be given to a good understanding of life together with a knowledge of biology and ecology that can be directly applied to fisheries problems. A fisheries science institute. However, educational programs do not focus on small-scale fishermen and their problems. Small-scale fishers need proper education to be able to solve their problems. The basic problems of small scale fisheries cannot be solved by government assistance alone. Providing funding, equipment and technology may not be enough. Attention should be paid to the socio-economic problems among small-scale fishers.

Social factors need to be understood. Lack of purchasing power and infrastructure, resistance to changes in lifestyle, religious beliefs, taboos and rituals, physical and mental laziness due to malnutrition or disease, are very problems other than small technical or biological problems. Big fish therefore, small scale fishers need to have an educational system. Current development theories recognize that the social, physical and biological environment is one of the factors of development, and therefore needs attention. International development organizations are now aware of the negative impact of aggressive and uninformed economic development. These concerns prompted the member governments of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to decide that FAO should start its new activities in the small fish sector.

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Conclusion

Based on the studies conducted on the field of socioeconomics, it is suggested that more attention should be given to enhance the literacy level of the coastal population. Since the literacy rate is low, small family norms should be popularized among the fishermen communities. Because the bigger number of dependents creates poverty due to low economic status. So from our study we suggest government should take necessary steps to improve the literacy rate, provide loan/subsidies and create awareness about mussel processing techniques among the fisher communities to improve their economic status.

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