

Socio-economic conditions of fishermen community in some selected areas of Nizampatnam area, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, India

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Abstract

The study reveals that the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen community in selected areas in the Nizampatnam Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. The results indicated that the living conditions are very miserable. In most of the families, there are more than four members and among them majority are illiterate. Their dietary requirement is not at all up to the mark, as they do not consume required nutritious food, in turn their physical capacity does not allow them for frequent and regular fish catch. In addition, 86% of people usually get addicted to drinking and smoking habits (liquor and tobacco). They do not have proper drinking water facility. Children of this community suffer from diseases like malaria typhoid, helminthiasis, and malnutrition, which lead to gastrointestinal disorders. Measures to be taken to improve the living conditions are integration of agricultural with fish/prawn farming system. Therefore proper fishery management policies, effective input supply, technical, and social support may improve the livelihood of the fishers, which will ultimately increase the overall fisheries productivity of Andhra Pradesh as well as India.

Keywords: socio-economic conditions, fishermen, nizampatnam

Introduction

Among the 7 continents of the earth, Asia is the world's largest continent with 4.2 billion people or constituting 60 % of the world's population. Within Asia, India is second most populous country in the world with 1.21 billion people or 17.5 % of the world's population [1]. In India 65% of the people is still dependent on agriculture as their livelihood and employment source, which includes fisheries as one of its components. Fisheries also serve as the valuable and cheap source of protein of the country. Fisheries sector occupies very important role in the socio-economic development of the country. It has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates the growth of a number of subsidiary industries and a source of cheap and nutrition food besides being a foreign exchange earner. Moreover, fish and fishery products are excellent food for humankind. Most importantly, it is thus source of livelihood for a large section of economically backward population of the country. By the end of 2000, there were 5.70 lakhs of fishermen in the 9 coastal districts itself there were around 53 thousands fishermen and among them only 10 thousand are actively involved in fishing. Fishing communities often are poor, physically isolated and with a little access to the public, infrastructures and services or coverage by social policies including population policies. Their socio-economic setting usually is conducive to high fertility families with an abundant labor force are at advantage in the exploitation of open access fishery resources and large offspring facilities the diversification of source of income [2]. Population policies and programmes need to be adapted to the socio-economic context of target population taken into account the role of demographic patterns in long term family strategies and

involve the active participation of social bodies [2]. The overall aim is to integrate population, health and welfare programmes with fisheries development and management actions in order to enhance the effectiveness of policies to improve standard of living and ensure sustainable exploitation of fisheries sector [3]. Systems of fishery management, which protect and recognize the rights of artisanal fishing communities, can potentially improve the sustainable management of resources, while simultaneously ensuring equitable distribution of return from fishing activities.

Sehara *et al.*, [4] worked on the socio-economic conditions of fishermen in some selected villages of Maharashtra and Gujarat coast. Srinath [5] made some observations on the food consumption pattern and nutritional status of marine fishermen community. Singh *et al.*, [6] worked on the social status and problems of fishing community at Allahabad. Sahoo *et al.*, [7] analyzed role of fisheries in FFDA at Balasore. Socio-economic conditions and cultural profile of the fishers in India- a review states that the socio-economic conditions of the fisheries in India are considerably low. Fishers generally have pursued less education and live under improper housing conditions. With a very low income from fishing, fishers supported large members in the family which compels the fishermen to borrow credits to fulfill their basic needs [8].

Materials and Methods

For the study, 200 families in the Nizampatnam area were taken into consideration. The survey was conducted to a standard questionnaire investigating the name and address of the fishermen, age, sex, communities/caste, combined/nuclear family, number of members in the family, education, mass

media of members in the family, education, mass media, occupation, type of craft, type of nets, houses, fish marketing, drinking habits, employment, medical facilities, food consumption pattern per month.

Observations

In the study, several qualitative and quantitative variables have been analyzed. The data has been performed for the evaluation of the raw metric values. The average of the respondents of the fishermen community was 34 years and the population spread 17-55. It was observed that there are 4 or more members in a family. Among children, infants occupy maximum number. Annual income distribution 40% fisher goes to Rs.1 to 2000/- and 28% goes to 2 to 3000/-. Habits of fishermen was 86% goes to liquor, beady/ cigarette and 14% goes to without any habit. Craft distribution own craft only 16%, joint goes to 25% and lease was 59 %. Regarding the employment characteristic 70% of these communities are unemployed due to lack of sufficient financial resources and educational facilities. Most of the people of this community take fish/prawn (cooked, half-cooked, or heated on direct flames) only as main item of the food.

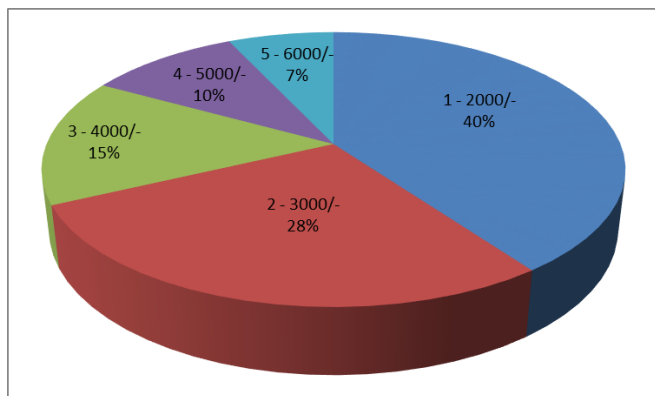


Fig 1: Annual Income distribution of the Fisherman in Nizampatnam area

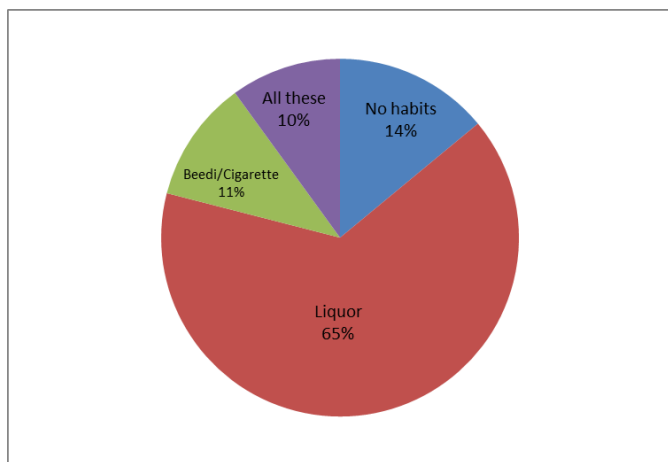


Fig 2: Habits of the Fisherman in Nizampatnam area

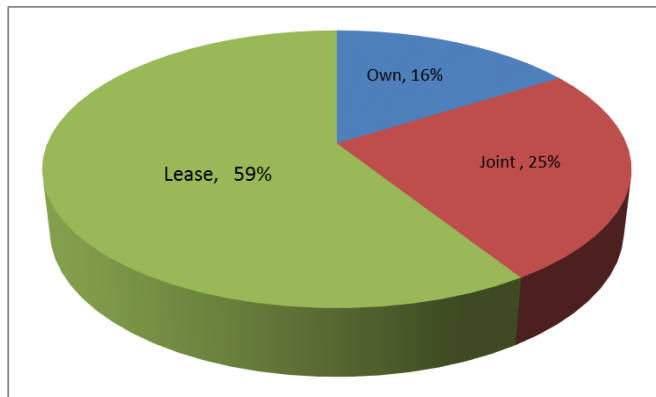


Fig 3: Crafts distribution of the Fisherman in Nizampatnam area

Discussion

Fishermen are not only weak but also socially backward, illiterate and their economic condition is usually conducive to high fertility families with an abundant labor force are at advantage in the exploitation of marketing and other things. In the marketing, the middlemen role is very high. The geographical structure of the harvesting field of this area does not give scope for fair and quick marketing. The dietary requirements are not at all up to the mark, as they do not consume required nutrients hence their physical capacity does not allow them for regular fish catch. In addition to nearly 86% of this community usually get addicted to drinking and smoking habits(liquor and tobacco).As they do not have sufficient medical facilities and meager sanitary and drinking water facilities, the children of this community exhibit poor and very weak and they are under distinctly low state of nutrition or mild state of under nutrition. Most common diseases found among these children are gastro-intestinal disorders, bronchial disorders, malaria, typhoid, jaundice, scabies, helminthiasis and particularly nematode infection is very high because of their feeding habits. Most of the people are ignorant of the quality and quantity of the food to be taken at the various stages of their growth. Tewari *et al.*,^[9] stated that over-exploitation, deterioration in environmental quality, fall in catch per unit effort, high price of fuel equipment and high labor and service charges are detrimental to the rate of growth of fisheries. Marketing of majority of fish is done by middlemen on whom the fishermen depend for boats and price resulting in poor returns in this area. The annual income of fishermen was given fig 1. And their income spent their food and the remaining were spend on clothing and purchase of cooking fuel. Habits of fishermen was given in fig 2 and crafts distribution was given fig 3. Fishers generally have pursue less education and live under improper housing conditions with a very low income from fishing and fishers supported a large member of family which complete the fisher's to borrow credits to fulfill their basic needs^[9]. The incomes of the fishers were very low and remain circulated inside the various circle of poverty. Socio economic conditions of fishermen of Masoli Reservoir, in Gangakhed (Tq), Parbhani Dist.,

Maharashtra state, India” the data collected from 35 families. The results disclosed that 45.26% of the fishers are literate and the economic status of the people was fairly poor as they are unable to engage work due to many reasons. They used traditional fishing methods instead of modern aquaculture techniques. The Govt. of Maharashtra provides fishermen welfare programmes such as Group Accident Insurance Scheme for active fishermen, Development of Model Fishermen Villages ^[11].

In the present study area, the fishermen are interested in motorization and gradually leave their traditional craft and gear and improved their living conditions. The traditional fishing gears and nets have practically of no use when high manpower is involved to get a poor harvest. The activities of fishermen and their economic status are parallels negative due to lack of development. It was observed that in the Nizampatnam only 16% are own craft 25% are joint and 59 % goes to lease. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations has many years of experience in providing expert advice and assistance for fisheries in the developing countries and the developing an extensive network of local expertise. It is particularly well placed to provide assistance for improved fishermen’s safety in the field of data collection and analysis, training education and the development of regulations and advocates a holistic approach to fisheries management with safety at sea as an integral part of the management regime. The Fishermen live below the poverty line from generation to generation and struggle for existence not for develop their condition ^[12]. In fishermen community, women play role in making diverse types of fishing materials, rearing children, household activities and sometimes in harvesting fish. The monthly income per fishermen was comparatively lower from the national per capita income. On the whole life, the fishermen are risk and their live have no refreshment. Their social status is very low. From the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made to improve the socio-economic condition of the fishermen and thereby improve their well fare. Jacob and Rao ^[13] reported that the Socio-ecological studies on marine fishing villages in the selective south coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, the study revealed that the fishermen in coastal villages are in pathetic condition because of poverty and lack of financial support either from the Govt. or from the banks. The study reveals that almost, 90% of the traditional fishermen live below poverty line. The large-scale industrialization in the recent years in coastal areas without having any strict regulatory framework has a devastating impact on the marine livestock, health of fishermen and their livelihood. The fishing villages are totally deprived of the basic infrastructure such as proper drinking water, connectivity of road, street electrification, and good sanitation.

Fisheries women play a significant role to improve economic status of their families. Majority percentage is participating in fishery activities where they exhibit fish handling preservation, processing and marketing, pricing, credit, borrowing, accounting, saving etc. Women have to know their capabilities and adaptability to all aspects of skilled profession. In the process of their knowledge and interest is being passed on from generation to generation in natural manner. Accounting to Yadav and Juneja ^[14] rural women in

Orissa, West Bengal, Keral, Bihar and some parts of the country are expanding their activities to non-traditional livelihood and are undertaking new opportunities such as net weaving and mending fish preening and commercial aquaculture. All of these activities promise higher returns for their labor’s large number of women are being recruited in the fish processing skilled labor is required. It is understood that as many as about 1.50.000 women are engaged in fish processing house located in all the main fish producing centers in the country. They play a significant role in the handling and processing shrimp and other fish for export. Systems of fishery management which protected and recognized the rights of artisanal fishing communities, particularly the rights of women of these communities can potentially improve the sustainable management of resources, and simultaneously ensure equitable distribution returns from fishing activities and rationalization population growth in these communities. In the present study the women play a significant role in handling, processing and marketing of shrimp and fish in the Nizampatnam area in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh.

Safety of fishermen at sea is left to the mercy of nature at present. They are unable to return to shore quickly at times of sudden storms, cyclones, depression etc. Petursdottir *at et.*, ^[15] stated that fishing has always to be a dangerous occupation. While risk will always be an inherent part of fishing, measures taken to reduce risks at sea have had some success, particularly in the technologically advanced parts of the world. Nevertheless, fishing still holds the record as the most dangerous occupation pursued by man. One of the basic obstacles to improve the safety is the fact that, in most places safety measures have been carried out on a voluntary basis. Srinath ^[5] discussed impact of motorization and living standards and assessed quality by the fishermen themselves. Findings showed that motorization was instrumental in bringing about significant changes in the living conditions of fishermen, who is general, felt that their status has improved and were more optimistic about their future. Regulations covering the construction and equipment of larger vessels generally exempt vessels under 24m and in most countries safety education training are not still obligatory. They also further argued that safeties are sea should be integrated in the general management of the fisheries in each country. The global fisheries situation has changed dramatically in the recent years.

Conclusions

The present study clearly says that the fishermen are in the domain of the economically and socially backward sector of the society. Education improvement and financial development are essential for this community. They have to leave their bad habits like drinking and smoking. As fishermen are illiterates and are unable to run their organizations, government servants, social workers, rural development agencies should show interest through the fish farmer’s development agencies and other organizational mechanisms in the progress of the fishermen’s living conditions. Measures to be taken to improve the living conditions are the integration of agriculture with fish/prawn farming system, improvement of education and make them to follow the family planning. If Government takes care of this

community, it automatically improves the increase of the fish catch, which in return definitely elevate the economic status of the country. The study concluded that proper fishery management policies, effective input supply, technical, and social supports might improve the livelihood of the fishers, which will ultimately increase the overall fisheries productivity of India.

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