THE SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDTIONS OF WOMEN FISH VENDORS IN KANYAKUMARI: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract : The Fisheries sector occupies a prominent place the economic development of the nation. At the macro level it contributes to a considerable increase in national income due to a higher of marine exports. The marine sector, though unorganized, the women folks have major role to play. Women play critical roles in fisheries, particularly in the pre- and post-harvest sectors. Active marine fishing is taken up by men. However, a small share of women take part in activities like, near shore fishing, seaweed harvesting and the collection of clams, mussels and bivalves. According to the Marine Fisheries Census, 2005, approximately 48 per cent of women from fishery households are engaged in the shore based activities like, net making, fish handling (sorting, grading, weighing, gutting and icing), fish processing fish trading etc. Among these subsidiary activities, fish selling is one of the major activities that bring, on the average, higher revenue. Based on the above setting a study has been made to analyse the socio economic conditions of women fish vendors in Kanyakumari district to carried out. 300 fishermen families were selected from the coastal areas of Kanyakumari town which has a total fisherman household of 1920. Appropriate statistical tools were used to analyze the data collected with the help of a well structured interview schedule.

Index Terms - Marine Sector, Fish Vending, Fish Catch Marketing.

I. INTRODUCTION

The marine sector forms one of largest sectoral activity in the country. The Fisheries sector occupies a prominent place the economic development of the nation and state at the macro level and the individuals engaged in the activity at the micro level. (Edward H Allison, 2011). India is the second largest producer of marine products which is next only to China. At the macro level it contributes to a considerable increase in national income due to a higher of marine exports. India's exports of marine products stood at Rs.45106.89 crores in the year 2017-18 as against Rs.37870.90 crores in the previous year (Economic Survey, 2017-18).

India, with the largest coastal area of around 8200 kilometres, with fishing villages of around 3800 has the harvest of fish of around 4 metric tonnes. At the micro level, it has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates growth in a number of subsidiary industries, and is a source of cheap and nutritious food besides being a foreign exchange earner. Most importantly it is also the source of livelihood for a more than 14 million people of the country who are largly the economically backward population of the country. Thus fisheries play a significant role in meeting the people's nutritional requirements, augmenting food supply, earning foreign exchange and in generating employment.

Fishery resources of India are either inland or marine. India has vast inland water resources spread throughout the country. The fish water resources comprise reverie systems, reservoirs, ponds and tanks, ox-bow lakes and derelict waters where as brackish water resources comprise estuaries and lakes and back waters. Both inland and marine fisheries directly or indirectly depend on the river systems. With congenial climatic condition, and availability of multispecies marine produce with more than 200 commercially important species in them, India is blessed with the richest marine resource. With this renewable, but with the limited resources, the sector is able to add a considerable share in National Income.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN FISHING SECTOR

With the increasing awareness among women, depending upon their level of education attainment, the labour force participation of the women folks has been increasing in all the sectors of activities. The marine sector, though unorganized, the women folks have major role to play. Women play critical roles in fisheries, particularly in the pre- and post-harvest sectors. Active marine fishing is taken up by men. However, a small share of women take part in activities like, near shore fishing, seaweed harvesting and the collection of clams, mussels and bivalves. According to the Marine Fisheries Census, 2005, approximately 48 per cent of women from fishery households are engaged in the shore based activities like, net making, fish handling (sorting, grading, weighing, gutting and icing), fish processing fish trading etc. Among these subsidiary activities, fish selling is one of the major activities that bring, on the average, higher revenue (Marine Fisheries Census, 2005, p.7).

II. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Freeda Chandrasekaran (1979) in his study attempted to examine the role of fisherwomen in the district of Chengalput. The study identified that the role of women in fishing activities is confined to repairing fish nets, marketing of fish, processing drying and salt curing of fish.

Diana Tempelman (1987) attempted to examine the socio economic status of the fisherwomen in the coastal villages of Vishakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh. The study could identify that the women get themselves engaged in marketing of fish for 7-10 hours a day. They generally, carry this for sales in their overheads. For them, to cover a longer distance, buses are the major mode of transportation. For selling within the towns limits, bicycles and auto rickshaws are important means of transport. The study arrived at the conclusion that the women vendor, on the average gets higher revenue when compared to revenue from coir making and other small business activities.

Narayanakumar et al. (2000) in their study have examined the socio economic conditions of marine fisherwomen. The study could identify that the marine fisherwomen are socially and economically weaker. The study could conclude that improvement in fishing technology has increased the fish yield and as a result, the women vendors are able to get more fish for sales resulting in higher revenue of the women fish seller.

Radhakrishnan and Sellammalle (2000) in their study have examined the role of fisherwomen in Pondicherry. The study could come out with the conclusion that the entry of women in fish sales has reduced the entry of middlemen resulting in higher revenue to the fishermen. The earnings of the fisherwomen, has helped to gain empowerment in their society. The study has also provided the interesting conclusion that the earnings of fisherwomen is higher than the fishermen. The study identified that the average value of assets of the fisherwomen has increased.

The study Mahesh et al., (2014) indicated that a major share of the fishing community's livelihood dependents on fishing and sales. In the earning process, the study could identify that the role of fisherwomen is of paramount important. While 52 per cent of the Women are engaged in fish processing, another 42 per cent are engaged in marketing and distribution of fish produce. The study could also find that the fish vending provides the female folks the highest income and the level of income depends on the number of working hours. The study viewed that higher the level of earnings, higher is their decision making power at home and vice versa. In fact, the study could view that the earnings of the female folks due to engaging in subsidiary activity is higher than the earnings of their counterparts at home. The study could also identify that the factors like, the amount of investment, the level of education, the family size, the earnings of the family do all influence the their earnings.

III. MARINE IN TAMILNADU AND KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

Among the states of India, the state of Tamilnadu ranks fourth in terms of fish production. With a coastal line of 1076 kilometres, the state of tamilnadu has 13 coastal districts namley, Thiruvallur, Chennai, Kanchipuram, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram,

Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, and Kanyakumari, which is one of the highest number which are engaged in fishing activity. There are 362 fish landing centres along the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu with about 143745 fishermen household inhabitants along the state's coastal villages, with 30465 families residing in the district of Kanyakumari. The number of The total marine fishermen population of the state is about 6, 79,711, the average size of the family being 4.69. The maximum number of fishermen is in Kanyakumari district with a fishermen population of around 1.38 lakhs constituting around 20.29 per cent of the total fishermen population of the state. As per the Fisheries census of the state of Tamilnadu, the average number of fishermen population per village is also the highest in this district. The average level of literacy level of fishermen for the state as a whole is about 67 per cent which ranges from 1.69 in Thiruvarur district to 23.96 per cent in Kanyakumari district.

IV. PROBLEM SETTING

The above discussion on the fishermen and the status of women in fishermen households indicate that the standard of living of a family to a very large extent will depend upon its occupational structure, level of employment and income of the working members of the family. The female members add income to their families by way of getting themselves in the fishing related activities. Among the various fishing related activities, the income from fish sales was proved to be the highest income earning activity.

Given that the level of literacy in the district of Kanyakumari, particularly, the female literacy level of 90.45 which is the highest in the state of Tamilnadu, with higher sex ratio and second highest fisherwomen population, a pertinent question that arises in this context is that 1) what is the socio economic and demographic conditions of the families of fishermen, 2) to what extent the women from the fishermen families are able to add income to their families 3) what is the pattern of sales of fish by the women folks from the fishermen community and 4) what are the difficulties faced by them in fish vending. The present paper attempts to study these issues.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the above issues, the objectives to be studies in the present paper are:1) To study the socio economic and demographic conditions of the families of fishermen, 2) To estimate the level of investment, income and net profits from the fish vending. 3) To trace out the problems faced by women fish vendors in selling fish.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To study the objectives framed, primary data were collected from 300 fishermen families selected from the coastal areas of Kanyakumari town which has a total fishermen household of 1,920.

According to the report of Women Fish Vendors in India, there are three types of fish vendors. They are: 1) Stationary vendors, 2) Peripatetic vendors and 3) Mobile vendors. (KG Kumar, 2010). In the case ofStationary vendors they vend on a regular basis at specific locations, in markets. In the case of Peripatetic vendors, they walk from place to place to sell their fish: They are usually women fish vendors who purchase fish directly at auctions that take place at the village/wholesale markets/landing centres, and sell fish door-to-door, travelling on foot, and carrying their fish in bamboo baskets or aluminum vessels. They are a major source of fish supply to consumers within, and close to, coastal areas. In the case of Mobile vendors they move around on bicycles or motorized vehicles. They are primarily men.

In the case of Tamilnadu, including the study are of Kanyakumari, a majority of the women vendors are only Peripatetic vendors and hence, the present study concentrates on these types of vendors.

Since, the women in the fishermen households can get engaged in any of the related activities, initially 500 families were selected randomly from the total households. These households were approached and if found that the women in the household were engaged in fish vending either fully or partially, the required information were collected from them if they are not engaged in the activity, the household was

replaced with another. Thus, while covering the 423rd household, the researcher was able to get 300 women fish vendors. This means, for every 10 households, then women from eight households are engaged in fish vending.

Through the direct interview method, the information pertaining to their socio economic, demographic and fish vending related were collected and analyzed using percentage method and chi square test.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

SOCIO ECONONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE FO WOMEN FISH VENDORS

TABLE:1
SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN VENDORS

Sl.No.	Age (in years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Less than 25	45	15.00
2.	25-35	89	29.67
3.	35-45	81	27.00
4.	45-55	58	19.33
5.	Above 55	27	9.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Education Level	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Illiterate	36	12.00
2.	Primary	234	78.00
3.	Secondary	27	9.00
4.	Above Secondary	3	1.00
.	Total	300	100.00
	Type of family	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Joint	75	25.00
2.	Nuclear	225	75.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Marital Status	**No. Of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Married	228	76.00
2.	Unmarried	72	24.00
		300	100.00
	Size of family	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Less than 3	69	23.00
2.	3-5	156	52.00
3.	5-7	54	18.00
4.	Above 7	21	7.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Average family size	4.05	
	No. of Dependents	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Less than 3	264	88.00
2.	3.-5	31	10.33
3.	Above 5	5	1.67
	Total	300	100.00
	Average dependents	2.86	
	Ownership of house	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Own House	255	85.00
2.	Rented and leased House	45	15.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Nature of House	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Tiled House	156	52.00
2.	Roofed House	144	48.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: computed From Primary Data.

As given in table 1, an examination of the socio economic and demographic status of the sample women fish vendors would indicate that with respect to age, a majority (29.67 per cent) of the women street

vendors are in the age group of 25.35 years. The highest 78 per cent of the street women vendors are primary level completed. While 75 per cent are under the nuclear family system the remaining 25 per cent are in the joint family system. A little higher than three fourth of the sample women vendors are married. The remaining, that is, nearly one fourth are either unmarried or widowed or divorces or separated. For the highest 52 per cent of the sample women fish vendors, the size of the family is 3-5. The average family size is worked out to 4. This average family size is in conformity with the draft report published by the International Collective in Support of Fish workers published in 2010. The number of dependents, an important factor determining the economic condition of the family indicates that the average number of dependents in the families of the sample women respondents is 2.86 with the highest number of families (52 per cent) having dependents of 3-5. The ownership of house, another factor determining the economic condition of the fishermen community indicates that the highest 75 per cent have own house. However, the nature of house indicates that the highest (58 per cent) live in tiled house, while the remaining 42 per cent have roofed houses .

TABLE:2

PROFILE OF FISH VENDING

SL.No.	No. of days of Sales a week	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Less than 3 days	21	7.00
2.	3-6 days	261	87.00
3.	All days	18	6.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Duration of vending	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	3-6 months	24	8.00
2.	6-9 months	26	8.67
3.	9-11	223	74.33
4.	Throughout the year	27	9.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Reason for Business	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	To avoid wastage	36	12.00
2.	To lead an independent life	84	28.00
3.	To add to family income	180	60.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Amount of Investment (in Rs.)	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Less than 500	54	18.00
2.	500-1000	84	28.00
3.	1000-1500	120	40.00
4.	1500-2000	30	10.00
5.	Above 2000	12	4.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Nature of Fund	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Own	42	14.00
2.	Borrowed	258	86.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Nature of Borrowings	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Private Money Lenders	175	67.83
2.	Friends and relatives	66	25.58
3.	Earlier Savings	17	6.59
	Total	258	100.00
	Distance Covered to Spot (in Kms)	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Less than 5	62	20.67
2.	5-10	125	41.67
3.	10-15	94	31.33
4.	Above 15	19	6.33
5.	Total	300	100.00
	Mode of Transportation to sale point	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Tricycle	24	8.00
2.	Bus	36	12.00
3.	Auto	240	80.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Income from Vending (in Rs.)	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Less than 750	38	12.67
2.	750-1500	162	54.00

3.	1500-2250	54	18.00
4.	2250-3000	28	9.33
5.	Above 3000	18	6.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Mode of Sales	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Credit	75	25.00
2.	Cash	225	75.00
	Total	300	100.00
	Problem in Sales	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1.	Problems from local people	45	9.41
2.	Problems of finance	84	17.57
3.	Frequent headache	122	25.52
4.	Leg and hit pain	138	28.87
5.	Throat pain	89	18.62
	Total	478	100.00

Source: computed from Primary Data.

As it could be seen in table 2, in the case of number of days engaged in the fish sales by the sample women vendors, the highest share of 87 per cent of the sample respondents engaged in selling for 3-6 days a week. Generally, during the summer season the fish catch will be high and during the winter season due to rain the catchment is expected to be lower which affects the business and the income of the women vendors. The opinion obtained from the sample respondents regarding the nature of business indicated that the highest share of 74.33 per cent carry out their vending business for 9-11 months, followed by the duration of 6-9 months. The opinion on the reason for doing fish vending indicated that 60 per cent do street vending to add to the family income. The least 12 per cent viewed that they do vending to avoid the wastage of unsold fish in the auction market.

As seen in the table, the highest share of 40 per cent of the women fish vendors invest Rs.1000-1500 per business and 86 per cent of the sample women respondents depend on borrowed fund for purchase of marine products for sale. The estimated average level of investment for the entire women vendor sample is worked out to Rs.1135 per trip of sales. The borrowings are on daily basis for which they pay usurious rate of interest to the private money lenders.

The women street vendors cover the nearby towns and villages of the coastal area. Generally, they carry the produce for sales to the sale spot through some mode. The table indicates that a majority of the sample women vendors take their produce in auto till sale point and after that they carry the produce in their heads. A majority of the women vendors cover a distance of 5-10 kilometres from their purchase spot to reach their sale spots. On the average they walk down atleast10 kilometres for three to four hours a day by carrying vessels on their forehead.

An examination of their income for their hardship they undergo indicates that it is very meagre. The highest 54 per cent of the sample women vendors make a business of Rs.750-1500 per trip. Only six per cent make a sale of above Rs.3000. The average level of sales for the entire sample women vendors per trip is worked out to Rs.1530. given the borrowings of Rs.1135, the women vendors left with just a profit of Rs.395, in which, on the average they pay an interest of Rs.100 per borrowings. Hence, the balance for the efforts they have taken is just Rs.295. It can also be noted that, to avoid wastage, 25 per cent of the women respondents sell a produce for credit.

An examination of the problems faced by the women vendors indicates that they have more than one problem. During the time of vending the produce, they local people creates problems to these women. The highest 28.87 per cent of the sample women viewed that leg and hit pain as the major health problem. Another 25.52 per cent viewed that due to carrying the produce on head, they have frequent headache. Because of shouting at streets to indicate their arrival, 18.62 per cent face the problem of throat pain. Another 17.57 per cent viewed that financing is a problem in their business.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOCIO ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS AND FISH VENDING

As noted already, the studies carried out earlier indicated that the socio economic factors have a perceptible influence on the fish vending. This relationship is being tested in the context of the study area by using the chi square test. A few socio economic and demographic factors related with the number of days of sales that is the frequency of sale.

TABLE:3

CHI SQUARE TEST MEASURING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS AND INVOLVEMENT IN FISH VENDING BUSINESS

Sl.No.	Ho	CV	DF	Critical value	Decision Making
1	there is no relationship betweensize of the family and the no. of days of sales a wee**k**	127.33	6	12.59	**Reject Ho**
2	"there is no relationship between the distribution of age of sample respondents and number of days of sales a week"	24.90	8	15.51	**Reject Ho**
3	"there is no relationship between relationship between the level of education attainment of sample respondents and number of days of sales a week"	49.94	6	12.59	**Reject Ho**
4	"there is no relationship between relationship between size of family and the amount of daily investment"	66.47	12	21.03	**Reject Ho**
5.	"there is no relationship between relationship between amount of investment and the source of borrowings"	45.39	4	9.49	**Reject Ho**

1) The first Null Hypothesis (relationship) tested is “there is no relationship between size of family and number of days of sales a week”. The size of the family is said to influence the frequency of sales as more the number of members, higher is the requirement for money and more is expected to be the frequency of sales. From table 3 it can be understood that the calculated value is 127.33. The table value for 6 degrees of freedom and at 5 per cent level of significance is 12.59. A comparison of the calculated value with that of the table value indicates that the calculated is greater than the table value and hence the Null Hypothesis that “there is no relationship between size of family and number of days of sales a week” has been rejected.

2) The second Null Hypothesis (relationship) tested is "there is no relationship between distribution of age of the sample respondents and number of days of sales a week”. The age of the respondents is said to have a significant influence on the frequency of sales, at higher levels of age the household responsibilities are expected to be more and hence, the frequency of sales is also expected to be more. From table 3 it can be understood that the calculated value is 24.90. The table value for 8 Degrees of Freedom and at 5 per cent level of significance is 15.51. A comparison of the calculated value with that of the table value indicates that the calculated is greater than the table value and hence the null hypothesis that "there is no relationship between distribution of age of the sample respondents and number of days of sales a week” has been rejected.

3) The third Null Hypothesis (relationship) tested is "there is no relationship between the level of education attainment of sample respondents and number of days sales a Week”. It is assumed that at higher level of education, the interest to take up a lower graded work is lower. Hence, it expected to have less frequency of sales at higher level of education and vice versa. From table 3 it can be understood that the calculated value is 49.94. The table value for 6 degrees of freedom and at 5 per cent level of significance is 12.59. A comparison of the calculated value with that of the table value indicates that the calculated is greater than the table value and hence the Null Hypothesis that “there

is no relationship between the level of education attainment of sample respondents and number of days sales a Week" has been rejected.

4) The fourth Null hypothesis (relationship) tested is "there is no relationship between size of family and the amount of daily investment". It is expected that with more number of family members, the responsibility to earn more is also higher resulting in to have higher frequency of sales. From table 3 it can be understood that the calculated value is 66.47. The table value for 12 degrees of freedom and at 5 per cent level of significance is 21.03. A comparison of the calculated value with that of the table value indicates that the calculated is greater than the table value and hence the Null Hypothesis that "there is no relationship between size of family and the amount of daily investment" has been rejected.

5) The fifth Null hypothesis (relationship) tested is "there is no relationship between amount of investment and the source of borrowings". Given the poor economic conditions of the women fish vendor, with lesser level of investment requirement, they may be able to arrange internally. However, for higher level of required investment, they have to depend on external sources like, the money lenders. Thus, there expected to be a relationship between the amount of investment and the source of borrowings. From table 3 it can be understood that the calculated value is 45.39. The table value for 4 degrees of freedom and at 5 per cent level of significance is 9.49. A comparison of the calculated value with that of the table value indicates that the calculated is greater than the table value and hence the Null Hypothesis that "there is no relationship between relationship between amount of investment and the source of borrowings"

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

With the fishing community playing a major role in the Fisher women faces the problem of marketing their products. They lack in marketing strategies. Though SHGs play a significant role in the empowerment of women, the support and the liaison with SHGs in interior urban markets, lack of imagination and coordination constrains their marketing efforts. Since there are no storage facilities available, they are forced to sell their produce immediately once purchased. Hence, they get poor price for the produce. Hence, in the town limits a separate storage facilities can be created. As it is found in the case of vegetable, 'uzhavarsanthai' a common place of fish sales can be created. This would reduce the role of middlemen considerably. Easy availability of credit facility would help them to invest and earn more. A majority of the women vendors viewed that the bus conductors or the auto drivers do not permit them to load the produce due to the smell. Hence, the local municipality can create transportation facilities to these women at a reasonable price. They viewed that this is one the major reason for taking the produce very late to the sale spot which affects their sales considerably. During off seasons, they women fish vendors do not have any job. In fact, even their heads of the family do not have job. Hence, given the minimum or no role of fishermen cooperatives in women fish vending, a separate SHG can be created for these women vendors to create jobs. The group can be extended to have financial and marketing support during on season also.

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