

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FISHERMEN COMMUNITY

(with special reference to Nagapattinam Town, Tamil Nadu)

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## Abstract

Fishery is the oldest and most important livelihood option for the inhabitants of the coastal line of the country since times immemorial. This natural resource along with the marine environment has been the custodian of livelihood security of the coastal populace. The web of life of the coastal community is woven around it, be it festivals, weddings or even death, the community is intricately related to the natural marine resource. From the analyses the result shows that, the income from fish catching is a major source followed by land income, livestock income and other sources like salary, rent, business of the fish workers. The study concludes that all the fisherman's expenditure largely spent on education of their children.

*Key words: Fishermen Income, Fishermen Expenses, Socio-Economic Status*

## Introduction

Fisheries sector is one of the promising subdivisions in the Agricultural sector of India. The fishing sector is recognized as a major income and employment generator to the rural poor of the nation as well as it stimulates development of a number of subsidiary industries. It is also a source of cheap and nutritious food with high caloric value and also a source of foreign exchange of country. Fisheries sector contributes significantly to the Indian economy by providing livelihood to approximately 14.49 million people. India is the second largest fish producing nation in the world. India is also a major contributor of fish through aquaculture and have second rank in the production in the world after China. The total fish production in India during 2016-17 is 18.06 Million Tonnes (MT) including 7.071 Metric tonnes from Inland sector and 4.59 metric tonnes from Marine sector. Inland fisheries sector has a share of about 62% in total fish production of the India.

But the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen in India are very low. They are lacking the culture of education, and live under improper housing conditions. They normally living in the narrow strip of land as crowded without proper sanitation facilities that leads to health issues among fishermen in India. Due to the low income of the family, they does not have sufficient basic facilities in their houses, they need to support a large number of family members that compel the fishermen to borrow credits to fulfil their basic needs. Tamil Nadu is the one of the major coastal state of India. The socio economic condition of fishermen in Tamil Nadu is not different from these. The social economic life of traditional fish workers in Tamil Nadu is very low. They socially belong to one of the most depressed classes in the state. The fishermen belonging to the traditional fishermen community lives with poverty. Their income and land ownership of land and housing facilities and standard of living are pathetic. Fish workers in Tamil Nadu belong to three religious groups mainly Hindus, Christians and Muslims. Their social life and pattern of living three religious communities are almost similar. Their life is centered on the fishing seasons which decide the rhythm of their life.

**Objectives of the study**

- To observe the socio-economic status of fishermen in Nagapattinam Town, Tamil Nadu
- To study the occupational pattern and allied occupational hazards in this present industry

**Research Methodology:****Study Area**

Nagapattinam is assumed to be the most curtail fishing point in Tamil Nadu and most of the trade of marine fish takes place in Nagapattinam either be it import or export. So the fishing industry is dependent on trading points like Nagapattinam and the study focuses to draw some references on current standard of living based on fishermen residing over here. Assessment of the benefits or demerits of an occupation that is being practiced by these men for so many years is also a concern of this study.

**Sample Size**

To attain the insights of the socio economic conditions of fishermen in Nagapattinam, a representative sample of 50 fishermen have been randomly selected from Nagapattinam town of fishermen. As Nagapattinam holds a strong position in the marine fisheries in Tamil Nadu so a reference of the population can be dawned on the basis of the sample drawn.

**Data Collection**

The present study is based basically on primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected by conducting field study and interview with the fishermen of Nagapattinam through well designed questionnaire. Secondary data is gathered from both internal and external sources; organizational websites/ papers/annual reports and documents constitute the main source of internal secondary data; for external secondary sources we had rely on published documents, books, magazines, journals, papers, blogs etc.

**Research Design**

Keeping in mind the restricting time and cost factors, data collection process have been conducted through sample survey with the fishermen by the help of questionnaire (drafted mainly in Tamil for the convenience of the beneficiaries) prepared with the help of experts in this field; survey is conducted mainly on the grounds like family strength, education of fishermen and family, decision making abilities in family, society and panchayat or gram sabha, fishing income, cost of fishing, savings, services available, assessment of aids by government etc.; these data are compiled and analysed for interpretation after collection; conclusion of the report with summarized findings followed by limitations of the study and scope for further research.

**Data analysis and interpretation**

Variables	No.of respondents	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
Below 30yrs	14	28
31 to 40yrs	26	52
41 to 50yrs	06	12
51yrs & above	04	08
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	94
Female	03	06
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	44	88
Unmarried	06	12
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Below High School	16	32
Higher Secondary	24	48
Graduate	06	12
Diploma	04	08
<b>Monthly income</b>		
Below Rs.5000	11	22
Rs.5001 to 10000	23	46
Above Rs.10000	16	32

<b>Savings</b>		
Bank	11	22
Insurance	09	18
Chit fund	19	38
Post office	06	12
Gold	03	06
Land	02	04
<b>Purpose of Saving</b>		
Home Construction / Modification	06	12
Purchasing any household/ Business product	19	38
Children Education	16	32
Children Marriage	08	16
To earn interest	01	02
<b>Type of boat</b>		
Small	46	92
Medium	03	06
Large	01	02

The above table reveals that 52 per cent of fishermen age group between 31 to 40yrs, 28 per cent were below 30yrs. vast majority (94 per cent) of the respondents were male and remaining 06 per cent of the respondents were female. Vast majority (88 per cent) of the respondents were married and remaining 12 per cent of the respondents were unmarried. Nearly half (48 per cent) of the respondents were higher secondary level, 46 per cent were Rs.5001 to 10000 of monthly income, more than one third (38 per cent) of the respondents were saved in chit fund. More than one third (38 per cent) of the respondents were purchasing any household/ business product. Vast majority (92 per cent) of the respondents were used small type of boats.

### Discussion & Conclusion

Socio-economic profile of the respondents is important to establish and explain the possible relationships among different socio-economic variables. Characteristics representing the personal and socio-economic attributes like family size and age, caste, social participation, educational status, experience in fish farming, income-expenditure pattern etc. In fisheries sector, socio-economic status of fisher folk/Fish farmers plays a key role in productive activities. Socio-economic parameters such as family size, age structure, education, social participation, income, and experience in aquaculture, size and nature of ownership of pond influence fish production.

International Forum should be established to protect the interest of the fishermen engaged in catching overseas; The regional organisations working of on the welfare activities of the fishermen should come forward to offer joint support to the cause of bottom level workers in the industry; Like the other international association, regulating laws and legislations to safeguard the workers in different function similar units must be started and specific legislations should be passed to protect fishermen; and The officials of the embassies should take care of the ill-treated fishermen in perennial problems.

The economic condition of the fishermen were too poor, even they were not fully engaged in a fishing business. Maximum numbers of fishermen were unable to fulfill their minimum requirements. Most of fishermen were less perceptive about modern capture fisheries techniques. Here capture fishery business was totally male dominant; it's also an important finding.

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