

Original Research Article

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Socio-economic and Marketing Constraints Faced by Fishermen in their Various Sustainable Livelihood Activities in Coastal Konkan Region of Maharashtra, India

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Palghar district of North Konkan Coastal Zone and Ratnagiri district of South Konkan Coastal Zone. Two tahsils were selected from each district and two hundred and forty fishermen were selected. Personal interview technique was used for data collection. An important aspect of the study was to identify the constraints operating against the Sustainable Livelihood Activities of the fishermen. The problems that are experienced by the fishermen for improvement in various Sustainable Livelihood Activities taken will be of immense help for training organization, policy makers, extension personnel, bank officials to plan future activities most effectively. The various social, economic and marketing constraints faced by artisanal fishing communities in their various Sustainable Livelihood Activities in the Coastal Konkan Region of Maharashtra state were studied to assess the poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability of artisanal fishing communities in the Coastal Konkan Region of Maharashtra state. "Over exploitation of the middlemen / agents / traders/ co-operative societies" (87.50 per cent), was the major constraint in fishing activities followed by "debt" (88.33 per cent), "lack of ready package of fish culture" (91.67 per cent), "no drying and processing land" (66.67 per cent), "dominance of middlemen in marketing" (87.50 per cent), and "inefficient execution and implementation of government programmes" (77.92 per cent).

Keywords

Socio-economic,
Marketing, Constraints,
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Introduction

Fisheries form the major source of employment, income and livelihood for most of the people inhabiting in the coastal region. Fishery is considered as one of the allied activities of agriculture. The Maharashtra State is endowed with a coastline of 720 km and the area suitable for marine fishing is 1.12 lakh sq. km. There are 15,716 marine fishing

boats in operation, of which 13,002 are mechanized. In addition to this, the area suitable for inland and brackish water fishing in the State is 4.19 lakh ha and 0.10 lakh ha respectively. During 2016-17, share of Fisheries in GSDP (at current prices) was 0.3 per cent. During 2016-17, State's contribution in marine, inland and total fish production (provisional) of India was 3.49 per cent, 0.81 per cent and 4.30 per cent respectively. There

are 173 fish landing centres on the coastline of the State. The State has 30 fish seed production centres and during 2016-17, about 2,414 crore fish seed were produced. Number of marine fishing villages/localities wherein fishermen reside is 456. Fishermen families are 0.81 lakh with population of 3.86 lakh. Traditional fishermen families are 91 per cent. Among the occupied 1.93 lakh, 39.5 per cent of the fisherfolk were engaged in active fishing, 57.6 per cent in fishing allied activities and remaining in other activities. Of the total 0.76 lakh active fishermen 0.63 lakh were full-time, 0.11 lakh part-time and the rest were engaged in fish seed collection.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in Palghar district of North Konkan Coastal Zone which is situated at longitude $72^{\circ} 45'$ East and latitude $19^{\circ} 41'$ and Ratnagiri district of South Konkan Coastal Zone which lies between $16^{\circ} 30'$ to $18^{\circ} 04'$ north latitude and $73^{\circ} 02'$ to $73^{\circ} 52'$ east longitude as population of fishermen is maximum in these two districts. Based on the review of past studies and after thorough discussion with the academic staff of Extension Education, Social Scientists related to Fisheries Extension and by considering the need of the present study, the various social constraints, economic constraints and marketing constraints faced by artisanal fishing communities in their various Sustainable Livelihood Activities in the Coastal Konkan Region of Maharashtra state were studied.

Ex-post facto research design of social research was used. Three stage sampling method namely, selection of districts, selection of tahsils and selection of villages was followed. By considering the criterion of having highest proportion of active fishing villages, 4 tahsils namely Dahanu, Palghar from Palghar district while tahsils namely

Dapoli and Ratnagiri from Ratnagiri district were selected. 12 villages namely Dhaktidahanu, Dahanu and Gungwada from Dahanutahsil and Satpati, Murbe and Datiware from Palghartahsil while villages namely Paj, Oni Bhati and Boorondi from Dapolitahsil and Rajiwada, Mirkarwada and Karla from Ratnagiritahsil were selected based on the maximum active fishermen population. 20 fishermen from each village were selected by proportionate random sampling method, so that each of the two districts represents 120 active traditional fishermen. Personal interview technique was used for data collection. Door to door survey of 240 active traditional fishermen was carried out by the investigator himself, with the help of structured interview schedule developed for the study so as to collect information in line with the objectives of the study. The interview schedule was pretested by interviewing twenty fisherfolk from Mahadtahsil of Raigad district. The data collected from the respondents was processed and converted into standard scores, frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations etc. as per the need of the study.

Results and Discussion

An important aspect of the study was to identify the constraints operating against the Sustainable Livelihood Activities of the fishermen. The important constraints faced by the fishermen in various sustainable livelihood activities have been sub-divided and presented undersub-headings such as social constraints, economic constraints, technological constraints, situational constraints, marketing constraints and policy constraints. They are presented in Table 1 to 6.

Social constraints

The social constraints refer to restrictions or compulsions imposed by society on the fishermen, these constraints are backed by

organized social authority. They restrict freedom in ways that are difficult to fight against. The data regarding social constraints of the fishermen are given in Table 1.

From Table 1 it can be noticed that, “Over exploitation of the middlemen / agents / traders/ co-operative societies” (87.50 per cent), was the major social constraint in fishing activities, followed by “lack of co-operation among villagers” (82.50 per cent), “no schemes in action by the government for welfare of fishermen” (77.92 per cent), “religious biasness and inferiority complex from other communities” (72.50 per cent), “off season no employment” (70.83 per cent), “conflicts in the area of fishing” (70.00 per cent), “political disturbances” (68.75 per cent), “theft practices followed by the labours after catch” (66.25 per cent), “illiteracy among fishermen” (65.42 per cent) and “informal sector money lending activities are still prevalent” (64.17 per cent).

Economic constraints

The economic constraints refer to external economic factors that affect fishermen and are usually outside of their control.

The data regarding economic constraints of the fishermen are given in Table 2.

It is clear from Table 2 that, large majority of the fishermen reported “debt” (88.33 per cent), “erratic fluctuation in the price of fish” (86.25 per cent), and “high labour wages” (83.33 per cent), were the major economic constraints in fishing activities, followed by “lack of credit facilities” (80.41 per cent), “non-availability of funds” (77.91 per cent), “high input and maintenance cost for gears and crafts” (71.66 per cent), “high cost of fishing equipment’s” (70.83 per cent) and “insufficient subsidies and incentives” (68.33 per cent).

Marketing constraints

The marketing constraints refer to factors that hinder the fishermen’s ability to achieve its marketing goals. Constraints can affect any element of the marketing system, price, place or promotion. The data regarding marketing constraints of the fishermen are given in Table 3.

The data in Table 3 reveals that, 87.50 per cent each of the respondents had stated “dominance of middlemen in marketing”, “lack of transport facilities for marketing” and “no fair price for the catch”, were important constraints in marketing of fish.

Whereas, “auction method of marketing prevalent” (70.00 per cent), “no cold storage and value added fish products processing facilities” (61.25 per cent), “insufficient infrastructure to hold the stock” (57.50 per cent), “improper hygiene and sanitation” (54.17 per cent) and “less access to market and its information” (52.50) were other constraints in marketing of fish.

The findings of the present study are in confirmation of the findings of Jha (2009), Sheela Immanuel and Rao (2012), Kabir *et al.*, (2012), Das *et al.*, (2013), Singh *et al.*, (2012), Sivanesan (2014) and Jasna and Palai (2016).

A close perusal of these findings leads to conclude that constraints faced by the fishermen in their day to day life reduce their efficiency in the fishing activities. The exploitation of the fisherman is prevalent by the other dominant actors such as middlemen/ agents / traders. The oligopoly of these few middlemen / agents / traders has distorted the profitability balance in their favour. This has supplemented the distortion and inequality in the fishing activities and reduced the efficiency of the fisherman in the supply chain.

Table.1 Distribution of the respondents according to their social constraints

Sl. No.	Social Constraints	Respondents (N=240)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Over exploitation of the middlemen/ agents/traders/co-operative societies	210	87.50
2.	Lack of co-operation among villagers	198	82.50
3.	No schemes in action by the Government for welfare of fishermen	187	77.92
4.	Religious biasness and inferiority complex from other communities	174	72.50
5.	Off season no employment	170	70.83
6.	Conflicts in the area of fishing	168	70.00
7.	Political disturbances	165	68.75
8.	Theft practices followed by the labors after catch	159	66.25
9.	Illiteracy among fishermen	157	65.42
10.	Informal sector money lending activities are still prevalent	154	64.17

Table.2 Distribution of the respondents according to their economic constraints

Sl. No.	Economic Constraints	Respondents (N=240)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Debt	212	88.33
2.	Erratic fluctuation in the price of fish	207	86.25
3.	High labor wages	200	83.33
4.	Lack of credit facilities	193	80.41
5.	Non-availability of funds	187	77.91
6.	High input and maintenance cost for gears and crafts	172	71.66
7.	High cost of fishing equipment's	170	70.83
8.	Insufficient subsidies and incentives	164	68.33

Table.3 Distribution of the respondents according to their marketing constraints

Sl. No.	Marketing Constraints	Respondents (N=240)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Dominance of middlemen in marketing	210	87.50
2.	Lack of transport facilities for marketing	210	87.50
3.	No fair price for the catch	210	87.50
4.	Auction method of marketing prevalent	168	70.00
5.	No cold storage and value added fish products processing facilities	147	61.25
6.	Insufficient infrastructure to hold the stock	138	57.50
7.	Improper hygiene and sanitation	130	54.17
8.	Less access to market and its information	126	52.50

Information gap on price and market has created reduced the bargaining power of the fisherman. The player has to completely depend on the middleman to fix the price of the catch and hence has to compromise on the income aspect. The absence of parallel information channel has limited the awareness of the players. The lack of adequate infrastructure like cold storage facilities, drying & processing land, Jetty, weighing facility, etc. has forced the phenomenon of "distress selling". This has been one of the crucial factors limiting the profitability of the fisherman. The fishing technology used by the fishermen community is out-dated. The crafts with or without motors are a common parlance in both the districts. The use of modern fishing gears is negligible and hence the size of operation, manoeuvring for fishing gets severely impeded. The use of remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems is non-existent which otherwise would have helped in augment the capture by the fisherman. The low pricing of the catch is prevalent in both the districts. The traditional customs and traditions in a way come in conflict with the modern technology and thus impede the development of the fisherman. The class conflicts between the various communities prevent them from uniting and presenting a united front before their exploiters. Inefficient execution and implementation of government policies and programs, in a way has delayed the development of the fishermen. The snag between the planning and implementation is obvious when ground triangulation" of various programs was done. The wasteful use of the resources on the part of the government has been a limiting factor in the development of the fishermen.

The lack of training was mainly due to lack of awareness of the fishermen for the need of training and lack of collaboration of the fishermen with the training institutions.

During the off season the fishermen had to focus on repair and maintenance of the boats and trawlers which led to the unemployment during that period. Illiteracy was the major concern due to lack of awareness about the importance of education and its benefits to the fishermen community. Also, the political disturbances dominated the fishermen to carry out their activities smoothly in some areas. The labours were involved in theft practices as they used to steal the fish catch and sell it to generate some extra income. Also most of them were dependant on the traders and agents for money lending practices. There was shortage of labour during the peak season as many of the labours were involved in working as agricultural labour along with fishing activities and their cost of labour was also high. Regarding the subsidy on diesel, oil, kerosene etc., the fishermen were getting it very late i.e. after 2-3 years and also the amount given was very low. Also the inclusion of foreign boats affected the life of the local fishermen.

Natural resource conservation, cleanliness, bad odour from the fishing harbour was major problem. To generate additional income some fishermen continued fishing even during the ban period. They did not carry out any hygiene and sanitation practices to maintain the natural balance of the shore. The thermal power plants and other chemical industries releasing harmful chemical effluents are also equally responsible for causing pollution in the coastal shores

In order to achieve the relevant and cost effective solutions to all the constraints of the fishers, a multi-organizational approach is highly required which will help in the implementation of new policies and strategies considering the opportunities and constraints prevailing on fishers and other stakeholders in the sector. While doing so, the varying economic, social, cultural, resource,

institutional and political conditions need to be assessed under one umbrella.

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