

Original Research Article

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Socio-economic Status of Fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

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Socio-economic condition of the fishers in Maharashtra is very low. The present study was carried out to assess socio-economic status of fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. Information was collected through the well-structured interview schedule. A total of 64 fishermen were selected randomly for interview. The study revealed that 82.8 % fishermen were male and all are involved in fish and fishing related activity. Mostly middle age fishers (36-50 years) were involved in fishing activity. Majority (82.8%) respondents were married and were lived in joint family. It was found that 71.9% families has the only one earner. Almost 95% fishers were educated and live in pacca house (90.6 %). Around 98.4 % fishermen had bank account. Maximum number of families daily household expenditure was up to Rs.300/-.Fishers must be encouraged to attend different training programmes to improve their skills in their respective works and it would help them to gain more income. Fishers must also be motivated to take alternative livelihoods.

Introduction

Asia is the world's largest continent constituting 60 % of the world's population. Within Asia, India is one of the largest and most populous country in the world having most diversified livelihood occupations. Most of the people in the country depend on agriculture and its allied sectors including fisheries for their livelihood. Fishing is the oldest and most important livelihood option for the inhabitants of the coastal area of the country from time immemorial. This natural resource along with the marine environment provides livelihood opportunities for the coastal people. Fisheries sector is playing

very important role in the socio-economic development of the fishermen community (Jonwal and Deshmukh, 2017). Apart from socio-economic development, fisheries also serve as the valuable and cheap source of protein of the country (Prabhavathi and Krishna, 2017) and important source of foreign exchange. Marine fisheries sector is dominated by the socio-economically backward artisanal and small scale fishers whose lives are closely intertwined with the oceans and seas (National Fisheries Policy, 2020). Socioeconomic status of fishermen mostly depends on fisheries resources. It is estimated that more than 12 million people are directly engaged in fishing activities and

about 60 million are exclusively depend on fisheries activities for livelihood in India (Rao *et al.*, 2016). Fishery plays an important role in Indian economy, but the economic conditions of the fishermen are very poor (Nayak and Mishra, 2008). Fishermen are separated into a different community and they are one of the backward communities in India. They spend their whole life in poverty due to uncertain prospects of income (Nandi & Parmanik, 1994). The fishermen are very important communities, they live hand to mouth and considered as the poorest among the poor (Kabir *et al.*, 2013). Socioeconomic conditions of the fishers in India are very low (Bijayalakshmi and Ngangbam, 2014).

Socio-economic status (SES) is a measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on various variables responsible for that like income, education, occupation, family effluence, physical assets, social position, social participation, caste, muscle power, political influence, etc. (Reza *et al.*, 2015). Due to lack of knowledge among fishers and fishing communities, leads to poor planning and implementation of various fisheries management programs (Devi *et al.*, 2012b and Devi *et al.*, 2014). It is essential to study the baseline information to initiate proper developmental steps and improve the socio-economic and livelihood of fishermen. Considering this the present study has been undertaken with the objective to study socio-economic status of fisher community.

Materials and Methods

Selection of study area

The present survey was carried out in Kasarveli, Kalbadevi and Warwade village (Map 1) of Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra as these are important fishing villages in Ratnagiri district. Majority of the villagers

belongs to fishermen community and involved in fishing related work.

Selection of respondent

The respondents were fishermen who were involved in fishing as primary as well as secondary income source for their livelihood. In present study, the information was randomly collected from the 64 fishermen comprising fishing boat crew member, fresh/dry fish seller, fish boat owner.

Sampling

To study the socioeconomic status of the fishermen the interview schedule (Fig. 1) and Google forms (Survey administration app) was made and distributed to the fishermen of selected villages of Ratnagiri district engaged in fishing activities. For calculation of percentage, frequency statistical tool like MS-Excel was used.

Results and Discussion

In the fisheries, socio-economic status of fishers plays a key role in various productive activities. Socio-economic parameters such as socio-personal information, economic information and enterprise information were studied.

Social status of fishers

Social status of fishers is presented in Table 1.

Gender

The study revealed that majority of fishers (82.8 %) were male while 17.2% were females. Raghavan *et al.*, 2016 in their study in Jafna Province reported that males comprised a higher percentage (54.4%) than the females (45.6%). However, females (12 %) were involved in marketing and

processing of the caught fish. Bhuyan and Islam (2016) reported that involvement of men and women in fishing was 86% and 14% respectively in Bangladesh.

Age

Higher percentages of fishers (56.25%) were in middle age group (36-50 years) followed by old age group (above 51 years) fishers (26.56 %), while 17.19 % fishers were in young age group (up to 35 years). Immanuel (2004) in her study in Kerala revealed that 52.67 percent of the fishermen belonged to middle age group followed by old age group (27.33%) and young age group (20.00%). Charles *et al.*, 2009 in their study reported that 52.78 percent of the fishermen belonged to middle age group followed by 40.28 percent in old age group and 6.9 percent in the young age group. Ujjain and Patel (2011) in their study in Danti village, Valsad district (Gujarat), India observed that 24.7 % fishermen in 18-36 age group, 57.0 % fishermen in 37-54 age group and 18.3 % fishermen in 55-72 age group. Devi *et al.*, (2012) studied socioeconomic and cultural profile fishers around the Loktak lake of Manipur and had reported that 44% of the fishermen were more than 46 years old belonging to the old age group.

Marital status

As far as marital status of fishermen is concerned, it was found that majority of the fishers (82.8%) were married while, 14.1% was unmarried and 3.1% was widow. Dr. Jayaselvi (2016) studied an economic and health status of fishermen in Tiruchendur and reported that out of total respondents 86% of them got married and 14% of them were unmarried. Nayak and Mishra (2008) their study in Ganjam district, Orissa reported that out of the total population 16,976 are unmarried whereas 19,504 are married and

1,235 are widow.

Religion

In this study it was observed that the peoples of three villages involved in fishing occupation were 100% Hindu. Pandey and Mishra (2001) in their study on economic feasibility of fish culture in the Faizabad district, U.P, India reported that cent percent fishermen of this district are Hindus. Chavan *et al.*, 2009 studied socio economic analysis of fishermen in Maharashtra, India and reported about 86% of the fisher folk families were Hindus. Ulman *et al.*, (2008) studied traditional fishing practices and socio-cultural activities of koli community in konkan region of India and reported that majority (95%) of the fishermen in fishing business were Hindu.

Family type

The result showed that 62.5% fishermen families were live in joint family while 37.5% families were live in nuclear family. Bhargavi *et al.*, 2020 carried out study on socio-economic status of fisher women community in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, India and found that the majority of the respondents lived in nuclear families (64.9%) whereas remaining 35.1% lived in joint families.

Ujjain and Patel (2011) in their study on Socio-economic Status of fishermen community of Danti village in Valsad district (Gujarat) India observed that 78.0 % of fishermen belong to nuclear family and 22.0 % of fishermen belong to joint family. Kabir *et al.*, (2012) studied livelihood status of fishermen of the old Brahmaputra river, Bangladesh and reported that 60% fishermen families were jointed and 40% of families were nuclear. Ali *et al.*, (2010) studied the livelihood status of the fish farmers in some selected areas of Tarakanda upazila of

Mymensingh district and reported that 42.5% family of the fish farmers were joint family and 57.5% family were nuclear family.

Family size

In current investigation family size of the fishermen was divided into two categories on the basis of the number of family members i.e. small family (five or less than five members) and big family (more than five members). The result revealed that around 75 % families were small (five or less than five peoples), 25% families were big (more than five peoples in family). Bhargavi *et al.*, 2020 in their study in Andhra Pradesh, India and reported 48.7% of the respondents had a family size of <5 family members and 51.3% constituted with >5 family members. Anon (2005) studied socio-economic status of fishermen in Nuvvurevu village of Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh and found that 38% of the families consisted of <5 members and 62% families were with >5 members.

Dheeraj kumar *et al.*, (2018) studies on fisheries status and socio-economic conditions of fisher community in Dholi region, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India and found that maximum fishers (37.50%) belongs to medium family composed of 5 to 6 members, followed by large family which is composed of 7 or more members (43.75%). The least number is of small family i.e., composed of 2 to 4 members (18.75%).

Number of household earner

The result showed that maximum number (71.9%) of fishers has only one earner in their family followed by 18.8 % families with two earners and 9.4% with three earners in family. Santhosh *et al.*, 2015 studied on socio-economics of fishermen community around the Junglighat fish landing centre, South

Andaman and reported that that 89.36% of the families were dependent on 1-2 members for earnings. These findings are more or less similar to the present study.

Occupational status

In present study it was observed that fifty percent villagers are fisher, 35.9% was fishing vessel crew members followed by 12.5% was fresh-dry fish seller/fish dryers and 1.6% peoples were involved in other business. Vichare (2010) had reported that only 17 percent respondents from mechanized boat owners in Versova were found to be the owner cum worker fishers and in Satpati this number was found to be quite high (57%).

Further she had reported that majority of the mechanised boat owners (70 percent in Versova and 60 percent in Satpati) claimed that they do not have any secondary occupation though in reality some of them found to have the same.

Dheerai kumar *et al.*, (2018) studies on fisheries status and socio-economic conditions of fisher community in Dholi region, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India and reported 34.44% people of village are only concern towards fishing practice either capture or culture, about 20.66% of people were working as vegetable seller including fishing practices.

Fishing and agriculture practice is done by 29.50% people of this region and remaining 15.50% people of this region were fisher as well as working as labour. Raghavan *et al.*, (2016) reported that Main occupation of (90%) fisher families was fishing, majority of the fishermen were doing fishing throughout the year and rest being part-time fishermen, they were engaged in fishing and labour work.

Table.1 Socio-personal status of fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra (N=64)

| No. | Characters | Category | Percentage |
|-----|---|--|------------|
| 1 | Gender | Male | 82.80 |
| | | Female | 17.20 |
| 2 | Age | Young age (Upto 35) | 17.19 |
| | | Middle age (36-50) | 56.25 |
| | | Old age (Above 51) | 26.56 |
| 3 | Marital status | Married | 82.8 |
| | | Unmarried | 14.1 |
| | | Widow | 3.1 |
| 4 | Religion | Hindu | 100 |
| 5 | Family type | Joint | 62.5 |
| | | Nuclear | 37.5 |
| 6 | Family size | Small (Five or less than five members) | 75 |
| | | Big (More than five members in family) | 25 |
| 7 | Number of household earners | One earner | 71.9 |
| | | Two earners | 18.8 |
| | | Three earners | 9.4 |
| 8 | Occupation status | Fisher | 50 |
| | | Fishing vessel crew members | 35.9 |
| | | Fresh-dry fish sellers/fish dryers | 12.5 |
| | | Other business | 1.6 |
| 9 | Educational status | Illiterate | 4.7 |
| | | Primary | 31.3 |
| | | Secondary | 50 |
| | | Higher secondary | 4.7 |
| | | Graduate | 6.3 |
| | | ITI | 3.1 |
| 10 | House type | Pacca house | 90.6 |
| | | Kaccha house | 9.4 |
| 11 | Type of ration card | Yellow | 26.6 |
| | | Orange | 71.9 |
| | | White | 1.6 |
| 12 | Would you like to continue fishing as primary/secondary occupation in your next generation? | Yes | 42.6 |
| | | No | 57.4 |

Table.2 Enterprise details of fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra (N=64)

| No. | Enterprise details | Category | Percentage |
|-----|----------------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. | Type of fishing | Capture | 100 |
| 2. | Fishing vessel | Mechanize | 100 |
| 3. | No of fishing vessel | 1 no. | 92.9 |
| | | 2 no. | 7.1 |
| 4. | Fishing gear | Gill net | 21.4 |
| | | Purseine net | 3.6 |
| | | Trawl net | 75 |

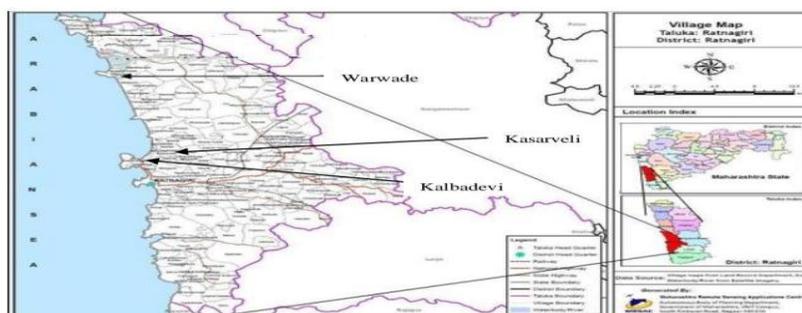
Table.3 Economical status of fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra (N=64)

| No. | Characters | Category | Percentage |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 1. | Account in bank | Yes | 8.4 |
| | | No | 1.6 |
| 2. | Source of finance for business | Own savings | 81.3 |
| | | Money from fish suppliers | 12.5 |
| | | Finance company | 4.7 |
| | | Bank | 1.6 |
| 3. | Loan for fishing | Yes | 16 |
| | | No | 84 |
| 4. | Daily house hold expenditure | Up to Rs.300/-, | 46.9 |
| | | Rs. 300 to 500/- | 43.8 |
| | | More than Rs. 500/- | 9.4 |

Fig.1 Interview with fishermen



Map.1 Showing study villages of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra



Educational status

Study revealed that 50 % fishers were educated upto secondary level followed by 31.3% with primary education. Around 4.7% fishermen were Illiterate as well as educated upto higher secondary level, 6.3% fishers were graduate and 3.1% with ITI education. Ujjain and Patel (2011) in their study on socio-economic status of fishermen community of Danti village in Valsad district, Gujarat reported that majority (90.0 %) of fishermen had primary and HSC level followed by 10.0% fishermen were illiterate, while no one having higher education. Chavan *et al.*, 2009 in their study in Maharashtra reported that 30% of the fisher possessed primary level education, 31% with secondary level education, 7% with secondary level of education while 32% fishers are not educated. Ali *et al.*, 2010 in their study on livelihood status of the fish farmers in some selected areas of Tarakanda upazila of Mymensingh district reported that about 10% of farmers had no education, 37.5% farmers completed their primary education, 17.5% with SSC, 25% with HSC level and 7.5% with bachelor degree.

House type

House type of fishermen was divided into two categories ie. pacca house made of red bricks or RCC structure and Kaccha house made up of soil walls. The result revealed that majority (90.6 %) of fishermen have pacca house while 9.4 % live in kaccha house. Chavan *et al.*, 2009 in their study in Maharashtra reported that 92% of the houses, where marine fisher families live were found to be pucca houses and in Sindhudurg district almost all the houses are pucca houses. Alam *et al.*, (2009) reported that 82.22% of housing structures were katcha while 11.11% were semi-pucca and only 6.66% were pucca.

Type of ration card

In the study area ration card was divided into four categories such as yellow, orange, white no ration card. The results obtained in present investigation revealed that majority (71.9%) of fishermen were having orange ration card, 26.6% fishers were with yellow ration card and 1.6% fishermen with white ration card. Santhosh *et al.*, 2015 reported that 87.1% of the families were under APL category and 12.9% of the families were under BPL category. These findings are more or less similar to the present study.

Would you like to continue fishing as primary/secondary occupation for your next generation?

In this study a unique question was asked “whether you like to continue fishing as primary/secondary occupation for your next generation?”. The study reported that around 57.4 % fishermen say no and 42.6% fishermen say yes to continue this present occupation to next generation. Reason behind not to handover their occupation to next generation may be due to less catch of fish, less profit, high business operation cost and high risk at sea.

Enterprise details of fishers

Enterprise details of fishers are presented in Table 2.

Type of fishing

In study area cent percent fishermen were involved in capture fisheries opertaion for their livelihood.

Fishing vessel

Study revealed that the fishers of studied area were involved in the capture fishery and they

all have mechanize fishing vessel. Ujjain and Patel (2011) in their study on socio-economic status of fishermen community of Danti village in Valsad district, Gujarat reported that 17.3 % of fishermen were having local boat, 13.0 % were having semi mechanized boat and 69.7 % were having mechanized boat for fishing activity. These findings are more or less similar to the present study.

Number of fishing vessel

In current study it was observed that the 92.9% fishers were having only one fishing vessel while 7.1% fishermen were having two fishing vessels. Hossain *et al.*, 2014 in their study in Chittagong district, Bangladesh reported that few fishermen had their own boats, some purchased boat through group ownership and rests were taken from moneylenders through dadon.

Fishing gear

In present investigation it was found that 21.4% fishermen were having gill net, 3.6% were with purseseine net while majority (75%) were using trawl net for fishing. Ulman *et al.*, 2008 studied in Konkan region, Maharashtra reported that in Ratnagiri and Raigad mainly dol net and trawl net used for fishing.

Economical status of fishers

Economical status of fishers of Rtanagiri was studied and same is is presented in Table 3.

Account in bank

It was observed that majority (98.4 %) of fishermen from studied villages have the bank account while only 1.6 % fishermen donnot having bank account. Dhande *et al.*, 2017 carried out study on socio-economic status of fishers of coastal India and reported that

among all the coastal states and UTs, almost 83.67 percent fishers have savings account either in bank or post office.

Source of finance for business

As far as source of finance for business is concerned, it was observed that majority (81.3%%) of fisher were using their own savings for fishing activity, 12.5% fishermen burrow money from fish suppliers, 4.7% fishermen take help of finance company and 1.6% fishermen approach to banks. Ali *et al.*, 2010 in their study on livelihood status of the fish farmers in some selected areas of Tarakanda upazila of Mymensingh district reported that 90% of the fish farmers used their own money for fish farming, while remaining 10% of the farmers received loan from friends, bank and NGOs.

Loan for fishing

Form this study it was observed that 84% fishermen not availing loan for fishing activity and 16% were availing loan for their fishing activity. Bhuyan and Islam (2016) studied socio-economic conditions of the fishing community in Bangladesh and reported that during the odd situation, they overcome the financial crisis by taking loan from somiti (45%), some of them take loan from NGO (12%) and relatives (10%). Hossain *et al.*, 2014 reported that most of the fishermen had taken money for investment through dadon (64%) and only 36% fishermen invested their own money for purchasing boats and nets. Reza *et al.*, 2015 in their study reported that that 64% of the fishermen received credit (loan) from different NGO's while 36% of the fishermen used their own credit.

Daily household expenditure

Study revealed that 46.9% families daily house hold expenditure was up to Rs.300/-,

43.8% families daily house hold expenditure was between Rs. 300 to 500/- and 9.4% families have the more than Rs. 500/- daily house hold expenditure.

In conclusion the fishing is the major economic activity in studied villages. Around 95% fishers were literate but the number of fishers who have studied higher secondary and above education was found to be less. The fishers should be encouraged towards higher education as it forms the base for the development. The cent percent peoples are involved in to fishing as their main occupation. Fishers must be encouraged to attend different training programmes to improve their skills in their respective works and it would help them to gain more income. Fishers must also be motivated to take alternative livelihoods. A proper extension linkage mechanism should be developed for effective transfer of technologies.

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