



FISHERIES SECTOR IN INDIA: A MINIREVIEW

Dr. Prasad Laxman Pagdhare

Assistant Professor, (M.Com, Mphil, Phd, Net), Rnc Arts, Jdb Commerce, Nse Science College,
Nashik Pune Road, Nashik Road, Maharashtra, India.

Email – Ppagdharephd@gmail.Com

ABSTRACT

The fisheries sector occupies a very important place in the socio-economic development of India. The sector has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates growth of a number of subsidiary industries and is a source of cheap and nutritious food. At the same time it is an instrument of livelihood for a large section of economically backward population of the country. Fishing is one of man's oldest occupations. It provides mankind with an important source of food, and has over the years developed into a significant source of earnings through world trade. In spite of advancement in the fisheries sector the fisher folk continue to be backward both socially and economically. Understanding the socio- economic framework, the extent of active involvement in the occupation, the impact of welfare programs, the role played by women in fisher folk families in different locations is crucial for devising an effective strategy for the development of this backward sector of the society. This forms the rationale of the study.

KEYWORDS: chemical cycles, traditional fishermen, fishery value chain, exclusive economic zone, environmental factors.

INTRODUCTION

India's marine fish harvest annually being 2.46 million tones contributes about 35% to the production from the entire Indian Ocean. This is expected from a nation with the dimension of a subcontinent, having a strategic geographical position and tropical climatic conditions with seas at the east (Bay of Bengal) as well as the west (Arabian Sea). The Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar waters also add to a considerable extent to the country's marine fish production.

Of the three major oceans, Atlantic, Pacific and Indian, the latter is still showing a steadily increasing trend in fish production (FAO, 1997). The increase in Indian marine fish production in recent years, as in the case of developed fisheries elsewhere in the world, is associated with differential fishing pressure on different species constituting the catches. This could be mainly attributed to (i) increase in number of fishing craft and their combined fishing effort on the stocks



being harvested from the same fishing grounds and (ii) the consequent management issue arising from the situation. One of the research paper on marine fisheries and fisheries management in India and presents the requisite management and conservation measures needed for sustainable fisheries, livelihood and socio-economic development. Earlier reports on monitoring, control and surveillance for marine fisheries (Somvanshi *et al.*, 1999 a & b) summarize the system of MCS and related constraints in India.

The fisheries sector occupies a very important place in the socio-economic development of India. The sector has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates growth of a number of subsidiary industries and is a source of cheap and nutritious food. At the same time it is an instrument of livelihood for a large section of economically backward population of the country. More than 6.0 million fishermen and fish farmers in the country depend on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihood. The fisheries sector has also been one of the major contributors of foreign exchange earnings through export.

COMPONENTS OF FISHERY

1. Marine fishing -a. Coastal fishingb. Ocean fishing
2. Freshwater fishing
3. Brackish water fishing
4. Fish culture

MARINE FISHING

The fishery activity is taken up in the entire coastline by the fishery villages located along the coastline

COASTAL FISHING

Coastal fishing can be defined as the fishing operation taken up within 5 Km form the coastline. Coastal fishing is taken up mainly by the catamarans and the country boat. Also now days, motorized country boats viz. Inboard machine engines (IBM's) and Outboard motor engines (OBM's) are commonly involved in coastal fishing.

OCEAN FISHING



Ocean fishing or deep-sea fishing involves fishing beyond 5 Km of the coastline. It normally involves trawlers, BLC and FRP's, which are involved in the fishing operation. Normally, oceanic fishing is highly mechanized with the use of sophisticated equipments and gadgetries. This type of fishing is highly capital intensive and takes a form of industry rather than subsistence livelihood. The normal practice of this type of fishing is that once the craft goes out for fishing then the period of fishing varies from 3 – 8 days depending on the size of the craft. These craft has onboard freezing facility for the catch.

FRESHWATER FISHING

Freshwater fishing is based on the inland water resources and is an important source of fish. The inland water has been exploited for its aquatic resources by the communities to meet their food requirement and also is a means of livelihood to many.

BRACKISH WATER FISHING

All these methods of fishing are specifically for the prawns and the shrimps, which are in abundance in the natural habitat.

FISH CULTURE

The fresh water culture is normally taken up with minimal investment through lease arrangement over the community water resources that are either leased by the panchayats or the state department on annual basis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Agnihotri (1995) describe the female to male ratio in Kerala in detail and assessed that the fishermen and their communities have gender bias in their population. The number of females were lesser in the case of fishing community, when compared to the State level sex ratio.

Andrew (1999) shows the economics of brackish water shrimp culture, the effect of shrimp culture on the socio –economic condition of shrimp culture fishermen and factors that are forcing the fishermen to take up this new venture. It also examines the negative impact of unregulated shrimp culture activity on the environment.

Anjani Kumar (2004) describes in detail the export performance of Indian fisheries. Fisheries exports have marked tremendous growth during the period 1987-2000 and the exports basket of fisheries products has become reasonably diversified. Export of frozen fish mark the



highest annual growth, but prawns and shrimps constituted the major category of exports, capturing an impressive five percent of the major category of exports, capturing an impressive five percent of the world export market. Trade reforms of 1990's; seem to have further facilitate the export of fish and fish related products from India and the feared import surge after the opening up of the economy is not still visible.

Annie Felice (1980) studied the living condition of fisher folks in Vypeen Islands of central Kerala, explained that a group of absentee fisher folks was emerging, a section of whom came from outside the fishing sector. The prime share of mechanized fishing in the state was collected by the person or groups actually not engaged in the fish production sector, such as industrialist, traders and officials. The fisher folks operating their traditional vessels and gears continued to suffer from all the ills that had existed earlier. According to the research, the mechanization had only a small effect on the inland fisheries sector.

RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

The fishermen colony where I stay and the changes in the thought process of fishermen / fishing community which I observed, motivated me to study the impact of financial grants on fishermen community in Mumbai & Thane area.

The Problem is- Fishermen are not encouraging the next generation to continue with the occupation, is it because the occupation is economically not motivated or due to changes in Socio-economic environment in the country.

The theoretical framework that comes out of the work can be spelt out that entire fishing sector is a networked activity. The fishermen need to be connected to several players in the sector. They must understand the changes in the sector in order to make best use of available opportunities. Merely having skills and knowledge of the profession will not help the people to continue with the profession.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This Study has certain specific objectives to concentrate on. These are pointed out as follows:

- 1) To throw light on the complete mechanism of different operations practiced by fisherman.
- 2) To understand socio economic aspects of fisheries in these two regions.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of random sampling is used for the purpose of the study. The logic behind the sample size in Thane District is dominant as far as fishing in the state is considered. Hence, a sample of 500 fishermen from Thane District is chosen as representative sample.

Earlier, Mumbai was a fishing destination. However, due to industrial & infrastructural development in the city, fishing activity has been severely affected. Therefore, the fishermen population in the city of Mumbai is reducing year after year. The sample size of 500 fishermen is selected from Mumbai. Thus, from the entire population of fishermen from Mumbai and Thane district, the convenient sample of 1000 fishermen is selected for the purpose of the study, which is a representative sample.

FINDINGS

SOCIO – ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

BUSINESS ANALYSIS OF FISHERY VALUE CHAIN

The income and Expenditure of fisheries sector is dependent on value chain. To understand the present context situation in which the chain operates. Hence the researcher refers to a study by Nimble System Pvt. Ltd. This analysis will help in understanding of the very nature of the fishery business, the stakeholder in the value chain, their concerns and issues, cost of operation of various operators in the value chain, the profit margin at the various levels of the value chain, etc

At present situation, we find that the producers (fishermen) in the value chain are located separately and are disjoint sets in terms of the boat capacity and the primary trade of the captured fish. The second set of players i.e. the middleman are a consortium of traders who are united and are supported by agents / auctioneers who help them become dominant in the trade. The third set of players consists of the wholesalers who are highly business-oriented group and have also formed an association. They have their strength in the volume of the trade that is available to them because of the market characteristics. Exporters are another group, which are disjoint and compete for the products specific for the international market. The value chain for them is an integrated chain in which they have control over both the backward and the forward linkages of the chain. This segment has internal competition amongst them and is separate from the domestic trade of the



products. The other players of the chain include the local traders, the ancillary facility provider, etc. which are in a diffused formation without any specific interest or role to play in the value chain.

NATURE OF BUSINESS

Due to its very nature, the fishery sector constitutes a value chain composed of two different phases forming a system: the capture / culture -or primary- phase, and the industrial –or secondary- phase. Together with a range of support services -which include transportation, commercialization and other activities-, they form a “production –distribution – consumption” complex. The industrial phase, in turn, is composed of three cycles: the first cycle is freezing; the second cycle involves physical processing that makes it possible to obtain a standard frozen product; and the third cycle is production of processed foods.

PRIMARY PHASE- SECONDARY PHASE ARTICULATION

The articulation between the catch / culture and industrial phases has been an area of concern for the fishery sector. In general, through practical constraints and facilitation and the use of multiple means, links have been established between the crafts and the processing plants, providing certain minimum stability to the chain, but the scenario continues to be bleak for the poor fisherman as the trade barriers created by the players of the value chain sharply and critically hampers the profit margin for him.

On the other hand the problem connected with the method by which the product is prepared in the catch / culture phase is of prime concern to the industrial phase because of the barriers to trade created by the global market standards, which limits the possibilities for its industrial processing.

ECONOMIC

Informal mechanisms govern the fishermen economy even today. There is complete Non existence of formal credit mechanism.

This has led to the dominance of “Patron-Client Relation” within the economy. The Patron (read trader/wholesaler/exporter) provides credit without any records and collaterals. Lending is normally done for repairs and purchase of boats (lenders part money for boat and make sure that fisherman invests in the boats) and nets. Money is also advanced for special social occasion like conduct of marriages, tonsuring ceremony, death rituals etc as also for other needs like medicines etc. Against these, the fishermen pledges the first right over the catch to the moneylender. Interest



rates are normally range between 36-48 per cent per annum but in some instances were found to go as high as 100 per cent.

The sanskritization of the “Patron-Client” relationship has become so endemic that client does not even have the right to change the Patron. Social, economic, political and in extreme cases even the threat of use of violence is used as means to get the errant back to fold

The trade is entirely without documentation and written records. Weighing of the catch by the buyer or his agent in smaller landing centers is “**Ocular**” i.e. it is not weighed but estimated visually. Even then it is not recorded but quantities are agreed upon.

Additionally 10 per cent of the auction value is deducted by the gaddiwala on the account of losses incurred due to drying.

The prices, though determined at the auctions, are not paid on the spot. The payments normally take place at the end of the day or the next day. Since no documentation is done, some respondents as well as NGO office bearers cited instances when the fishermen is paid further less as quantities are tampered with and only the buyer has “sale record”

POLITICAL

Most of the “patrons” enjoy the patronage of political leaders. The political patronage is obtained through provision of percentage stake in the business, party donations or outright payments for getting favorable decisions and policies.

It also allows the “patrons” to undertake subversive activities to damage a rival’s business or indulge in high handedness with fishermen. E.g. in Paradip and Gopalpur it was mentioned by a few respondents that there have been instances when a leading patron has out rightly challenged his rivals and gone to the extent of bombing the rival’s vehicles.

GENDER

Women play an important role in the fish supply chain at the village level. Typically, they are entrusted with the role of

- 1) Sale of the low value products in and around the villages,
- 2) Salting and drying of fish and
- 3) Sale of dried fish.



However, they have limited or negligible say in decision-making process as the entire process and procedures in the chain is highly male dominated.

The auction of the catch is a domain of the males and the women actors have negligible role to play. Their participation in the entire process is limited to products of generic nature and not of interest to their male counterparts.

The women have a high involvement in the ancillary support services but the exploitation by the dominant players in terms of wages is prevalent. Other instances of exploitation can be seen in the market where the women are the majority retailers and are harassed by the collectors of the market cess, other points worth mentioning is the lack of basic amenities to encourage women to play an important role in the chain.

The fish supply chain –being highly perishable is totally dependent on the timely availability of ice crushed /flakes for extending the keeping quality as well as the shelf life. This again is controlled either directly/indirectly by the “patrons”. Throughout the study and field visits, the nimble team did not sight an ice factory in the vicinity of the landing centers. Enquiries revealed that ice was generally made available from the plant of the exporters or brought by traders from nearby townships.

Transport is another vital link in the supply chain that is influenced a lot by the dynamics of “Patron-Client Relationship”. In the first place, refrigerated or insulated vans are not available in the local transport markets – barring a few which the exporters own. Most of the fish is transported by road using plain trucks, which are covered and packed with ice, husk and salt in a manner that it suffices for the entire duration of the journey – ranging from few hours to few days. Secondly, the first right to vehicles available in the market lie with the patron to the extent that others maybe denied a vehicle if the “patron” wishes so. Even when the transport is undertaken by train – the socio-economic-political nexus operates in manner – somewhere through direct bribes and elsewhere by a combination of the three that goods booked for journey are delayed – in case of highly perishable product like fish, it may mean total loss for a consignment – an anecdote provided to us by a Samudram representative.



GIST OF FINDINGS

- 1) Despite of progress of Mumbai & Thane in various fields, the social status of fishermen in this area is low even though they contribute a hefty share in the economic output and nutritional status of people of the Mumbai & Thane.
- 2) There are no any strong political as well as social reform agitations in Mumbai & Thane districts concerned with forlorn condition of the fishermen tribe.
- 3) Mainly in fishing communities of villages of Mumbai & Thane are featured by a gender based labor division. Fisher wife specially play an active role in secondary sector of marine so that fisher wife participation in actual fishing activities is limited – given also the taboos related with the fisher wife going to bring mainly in fishing areas. So in most of urban and rural region sample, dominated by of the boat owners is 100% male members whereas fisher wife have nothing in ownership of boat.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are the points describing the boundaries of the study and binding the study into a concrete structure so as to enable researcher to be focused on the concerned areas and make objective and result oriented analysis of the study.

- 1) The scope of the study includes fishermen community residing in Mumbai & Thane District of Maharashtra State.
- 2) Since data collected from Secondary Sources has it's own inherent limitation, this limitation is applicable to the present Study also.

CONCLUSION

To improve returns to fishermen and provide better products for consumers, several states have organized marketing cooperatives for fishermen. Nevertheless, most traditional fishermen rely on household members or local fish merchants for the disposal of their catches. In some places, marketing is carried on entirely by fisherwomen who carry small quantities in containers on their heads to nearby places. Good wholesale or retail markets are rare.



REFERENCES

1. Ashalatha. S., C. Ramachandra, I. Sheela, A. D. Diwan and R. Sathiadas. (2002). Changing roles of fisherwomen in India: issues and prospective, p. 21-43. In: M.P. Kohli Singh and T. Ratna (Eds), Women in Fisheries. Indian Society of Fisheries Professionals, Mumbai, India.
2. Dehadrai, P. V. (2002). Women at the center stage for socio-economic change in fishing community. In Kohli Singh, M. P. and Ratna, T. (2002), Women in fisheries. Indian Society of Fisheries Professionals, Mumbai. India, p. 1-7.
3. Sathiadas, R., S. Ashalatha, S. Sindhu and Y. Josephraj (2003). Women workers in the post harvest marine fisheries sector of Kerala: socio-economic profile. Fish. Chimes 23(2):31-35
4. Vivekanandan, V. (1988). Large-scale displacement of women from net making and the need to rectify the situation. Proceedings of the All India Workshop on Gainful Employment for Women in the Fisheries field Society of Fisheries Technologists. Cochin.
5. <http://indianfisheries.icsf.net>
6. <http://afcindia.org.in/fishery.html>