

Socio Economic Status of Fisher Folk Community in India: A Review

Rohit Khatua*

Department of Marine Sciences, Berhampur University, India

Abstract

In India socio economic condition of the fishers are very poor. Fishers live in under unsuitable housing conditions and they commonly have explored inferior education. Fishers are forced to support a large number of families to borrow credits to fulfill their basic demands due to very low income from fishing. Culture diversity in India is revealed in the fishing activities of fisherman. Different types of fishermen are benefited by training programs in most of the places in India. To increase the entire fishery productivity of India, proper fishery management policies, input supply, technical and social support are should be improved the establishment of the fishers.

Keywords: Fisheries; Education; Income; Livelihood

Introduction

In the world India is the second most populous country with 1.27 billion people [1]. In India 65% of the people are still dependent on agriculture as their livelihood and income source [2]. Fisheries are an important source of protein of the people of the country. According to Livestock Census, 2003 fishermen population of India is 14,485,354 [3]. A fishery plays a vital role in Indian economy but economic statuses of fishermen are very poor. At present, fishery sector in India is providing gainful employment to 5.97 million people of which 2.40 million are full-time fishermen [4]. In 2002 out of the 38 million fishermen 74% are engaged in capture fisheries and 26% in aquaculture. Within the poverty group of fishermen mostly small scale fisheries sector are the livelihood occupation. One of the most important reasons behind the poor economic condition of fishermen is lack of knowledge of fishers and fishing communities. Relevant and cost effective solutions of the complex problem of the fishers, new policies and strategies, various economic, cultural, resource, institutional and political condition, active of the participation social scientist and training programs arranged by various type of trainer, focusing on these primary purpose, the paper will review the state of various socioeconomic profile of the fishermen of India.

Social profile of the fishers

The reviews of the social profile of the fishermen are divided into ten categories. These are age, education, family type, family size, religion and cast, house and habitation, training programs attended social participation, scientific orientation, sex composition and their contribution.

Age: Age structure is important inferences of socio economic structure of any community. Ages of the fishermen of India were mention in different research papers by different authors. Bhoumik and Pandit studied on the age of fishermen at some beels of West Bengal, and reported that age of the fishermen were between 18-62 years [5]. Here 8.75% were between 12-18 years, 50.83% were between 19-40 years, 26.25% were between 41-60 year and 14.65% were above 60 years of age. The study on adoption behavior of the traditional fishermen reported that 38.33% of the fisher folk belong to middle age group, 48.33% belong to the old age group and among the trawler owners most of them belonged to middle (43.33%) and old age (35%) groups respectively [6]. Immanuel in her study on linkages among research, extension and clientele systems in marine fishers in Kerala reported that 52.67% of the fishermen come under middle age group and 27.33% are comes under old age group and 20% comes under

young age group [7]. Santosh ram et al. studied on socio economic of fishermen community around the Junglighat fish landing centre, South Andaman reported that the age group within 21-40 years found to be maximum followed by age groups of 41-60, 11-20. >60 and 0-10 in a descending order indicating values of 44.44%, 25.93%, 12.97%, 9.26% and 7.4% in the case of 0-10 [8].

Education: Soumyendra et al. in there study on socio economic appraisal of culture based fishermen in a part of West Bengal was described that qualification wise illiteracy rate was highest in case of four FCS (Fisheries Cooperative Society) that is, Ausgram (71.42%) followed by Sankai (55.88%), Naliapur (54.9%) and Notu (44.82%) in 2nd, 3rd and 4th position respectively [9]. Interestingly the lowest level of illiteracy was observed at Chhatadighi (50%), Khatpukur (60%), O.C.P (42.85%) occupied the upper positions regarding above primary level of education of fishermen. In a study on uses of indigenous technical knowledge by coastal fisherfolk of Mumbai reported that 46% of the fishermen had primary level of education, followed by 20% knew to read and write, 18% of the fishermen had high school education and 16% of them were illiterates [10]. Mukesh et al. in there study on profile of socioeconomic condition of fishermen in selected village in Kabirdham district, Chhattisgarh state was described that no formal education (46%), primary level(30%), secondary level (15%) and only 9% are higher secondary level [11]. Due to lack of unprivileged condition and lack of awareness about education, it affects skill development, exposure to production technology and marketing practices.

Family type: Utpal et al. in their study on some socio-economic aspects of the fishermen of twin pronged floodplain wetlands in West Bengal was reported that in case of Purba Helatala Fishermen Co-operative Society, 85% member out of 90% they preferred nuclear type of family and in case of Barhal Fishermen Co-operative Society, 84.72% member out of 94.45% they are preferred nuclear type of family [12]. Anon et al. in their study on the socio economic analysis of Nuvvulrevu village in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh had found out that

*Corresponding author: Rohit Khatua, Department of Marine Sciences, Berhampur University, India, E-mail: rohitkhatua9609@gmail.com

Received: 01-Feb-2022, Manuscript No: JMSRD-22-56933; **Editor assigned:** 03-Feb-2022, PreQC No. JMSRD-22-56933 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 06-Jun-2022, QC No: JMSRD-22-56933; **Revised:** 10-Jun-2022, Manuscript No: JMSRD-22-56933 (R); **Published:** 17-Jun-2022, DOI: 10.4172/2155-9910.1000347

Citation: Khatua R (2022) Socio Economic Status of Fisher Folk Community in India: A Review. J Marine Sci Res Dev 12: 347.

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majority (87%) had nuclear family and 13% of the respondents had joint family [13]. Karuppusamy et al. in their study on socio economic and cultural profile of fishermen in Puducherry region reported that out of 200 fishermen 130 or 65% people living as a nuclear family and 70 or 35% people living as a joint family [14]. Family type is an important factor to analyzing socio economic status fishermen.

Family size: In a study on fisheries status and socio-economic conditions of fisher community in Dholi region, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India reported that maximum family belongs to medium family Composed of 5 to 6 members, followed by large family which is composed of 7 or more numbers. The least number is 26% of small family that is composed of 2 to 4 members [15]. Shankar et al. found out that 30.66% of the fishermen had a family size of less than 5 and 69.34% had more than 5 [16]. In a study on socio-economic profile of fish farmers of Nizamabad District, Telangana found that the majority 60% of the farmers belong to the medium family which is between 4-6 members, 26% of the farmers are belong to the large family which is greater than 6 members and 14% of the farmers are belong to less than 4 members [17]. Family size reflects the availability of family labour plays an important role in fish farming.

Religion and cast: In a study on profile of fishing community of the river side villages in West Bengal reported that caste distribution showed that about 40.83% are belong to Other Backward Class (OBCA&B), 36.25% were Schedule Cast (SC), 15.42% were of Scheduled Tribe (ST), and only 7.50% were general and in case of religion it was found that about 58.75% of respondents were belonged to Hindu, 37.91% were Muslims and about 3.33% were of others communities [18]. Mukesh et al. was studied on profile of socio economic condition of fishermen in a village of Chhattisgarh state and reported that majority of farmers are found to be practicing Hinduism and no farmer is found to be practicing any other religion under that study & in case of cate majority of farmers (36.4%) are belong to Kewat, followed by Dhimar (32.7%), Malha (22.2%) and Baiga tribe (8.7%). Pandey and Mishra in his study on economic feasibility of fish culture in the district Faizabad (U,P) found out that 100% of the fishermen are Hindu and they also found that all fishermen of that region belongs to Pasi, Kumhar, Rajput caste [19].

House and habitation: In a study of socioeconomic appraisal of culture based fishermen in West Bengal described that 59% of the fishermen families live in pucca houses in Sankai and Naliapur 41% and 75% have adopted inhouse toilet norms by Pachayet led sanitation campaign. Gourav et al. in there study on socio-economic status of fishermen and different fishing gear used in Beki River, Barpeta, Assam found that 96.74% respondents had kaccha ghar and only 3.26% respondents had pakka ghar [20]. Vischara had found out that majority of the native male fish workers (75% in Versova and 100% in Satpati) were found to live in owned houses and remaining were live in rented houses [21]. Also majority of the respondent from the native male fishermen (nearly 80% - 90%) in both the village were found to have small house area where as most of the migrant fish workers (nearly 60% - 100%) were found to have very small house area.

Training programs attended: In a study on socio economic analysis in a village of Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh reported that none of the respondents have got any training in any of the aspects either in fisheries or related activities.

Social participation: Subaschandra in his study on Consequence of adoption of fish culture practices by fish farmers stated that most of the farmers about 84.14% had medium to low level of social participation [22]. Nagarajaiah in his study on knowledge attitude and

extent of adoption of social participation, 23.84% and 23.08% belonged to medium and high level of social participation [23].

Scientific orientation: Kubrevi and Khare had found in his study on profile of saffron growers that majority (90%) of small farmers had low level of scientific orientation and 10% had medium level of scientific orientation and none of the respondent was found in the category of high level of scientific orientation [24]. Shankar had found out that scientific orientation was at medium level of level for 56.66% followed by low for 23.33% and high for 20%.

Sex composition and their contribute: Vivek et al. described on their study on assessment of the socioeconomic status of fishermen communities in reach of Narmada river that among 2406 people 1264 were males and 1142 were females. Based on the sex composition, males are in dominating position of with percentage of 52.53% than female which occupy 47.47% of total population of the area. It also found that women are not directly involved in fishing but indirectly support in fishing activities by preparing and repairing of nets and acts as a supply chain of fishes to market. Devi in her study of fisher's livelihood and fisheries management in Loktak lake region of Manipur revealed that women were participating in many of the decision making activities on par with men [25]. Men took part in decision making activities like fishing and social functions and women mostly took decision in fish selling and house management

Economic and livelihood profile of the fishers

Economic and livelihood of the fishers consists of occupational pattern, average yearly expenditure, credit orientation and livelihood which are reviewed as follows.

Occupational pattern: Shivalingaiah et al. in their study on characteristics of rural youth and their participation in fish farm activities had found out that cent percent of small farm youth had low to medium annual income while 92% of big farm rural youth had medium to big annual income [26]. Nirmaleet et al. in their study on use of indigenous technical knowledge by coastal fisher folk of Mumbai reported that 40% of the fishermen had medium level of experience followed by 34% and 26% had high level and medium level of experience respectively. Kubrevi and Khare had found out that majority of the farmers 81.25% of respondents were engaged in agriculture along with service and business followed by agriculture (8.75%), agriculture + labour (6.25%) and agriculture + cast occupations (3.75%).

Average yearly expenditure: Sathiadhas et al. in their study on traditional fishermen in low income trap a case study in Tamil nadu had found out that thr annual average household expenditure of a fishermen family works out to Rs. 8,685 at Mallipattinam and Rs. 6,508 at Keechankuppam [27]. Further they had stated that the expenditure on food items alone works out to 58% and 85% of the family budget of those two villages respectively. S. Jayaselvi was studied an economic and health status of fishermen in Tiruchendur and reported that out of total expenditure pattern of the household observes the major share that is 50% of the respondents spent above Rs. 6,000 [28]. 26% of the respondents spent of Rs. 2,000 - 4,000. 20% of the respondents expenditure between group of Rs. 4,000-6,000 and 4% of the respondents spent a very few amount as their expenditure.

Credit orientation: Rahman et al. had found out that the fisher folk had no access to scheduled banks for loan due to absence or insufficient collateral security [29]. In a study on socio economic and livelihood status of the Fishermen community in Cumilla reported that the fishermen take a loan from different NGOs for several reasons

including boat construction (20%), net buying (30%), marriage (5%), food and medicine (5%), household construction (35%) [30].

Livelihood: Carney contemplated a livelihood comprises the capabilities, activities and assets (including both material and social resources) that contribute to a means of living [31]. Salagrama identified the fisheries sector incorporates a diver's range of livelihood activities, from production and processing to marketing and ancillary functions, but many of the people engaged in this activity remained unrecognized as fish workers [32, 33].

Conclusion

From various studies and research on the issue of socioeconomic conditions and culture profile of the fishers in different parts of India it can be concluded that in general socio economic research in India is somewhat developed but there exist a broad range of studies on socioeconomic conditions within the region covering from highly qualitative to descriptive. Moreover considering these various reviews it can also be concluded that for the overall development of the socioeconomic and cultural development of the fisher's scientist and policy makers should be more focus on the backward and forward linkages development. If all higher authorities of India related fisheries deeply thinking about these factors and take necessary steps then the socioeconomic conditions of the fishermen will be improved and even in one day according to fisheries reproduction in all sectors India will reach top of the position in the world.

Acknowledgement

History of all great works in witness that no great work was ever done without either active or passive support of person surrounding and one's close quarters, thus it is not hand to conclude how active assistance from senior could positively impact the execution of a review paper. I am highly thankful to our respected faculty Sri. Ram Krishna Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Industrial Fish and Fisheries, Ashutosh College, University of Calcutta: for his active guidance throughout the completion of this paper.

Last but not least, I would also want to extend my appreciation to those who could not be mentioned here but here well played their role to inspire me behind the curtain.

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