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## A STUDY ON FISHERMEN IN IDINTHAKARAI VILLAGE OF TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*In India, the importance of fisheries sector is well known as a provider of livelihood to more than six millions of people directly and indirectly and as a major foreign exchange earner. Fishing is one of the oldest employments of mankind. Small scale fishermen are important participants in the economic activities of coastal fishery sector in Tirunelveli district. Even though fishing sector occupies a vital position in Indian economy, most of the fishermen are living in poverty. They are economically backward. They have no permanent and regular income. Despite dangerous nature of fishing occupation very little research has been conducted. The research on this group of population is limited. Their financial instability, low profile in socio-economic status brought them down to earth not allowing them to prosper in their life. The study on fishermen in Idinthakarai village of Tirunelveli district is the main theme of this research.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Fishing is one of the oldest employments of mankind. This occupation existed even before the emergence of agriculture and still continues to be one of the major occupations of the world. Fish products constitute the primary sector as does agriculture. In earliest times most foodstuffs were used at once and not stored; but as population increased techniques were developed for preserving fish by drying, smoking, salting etc. It became desirable to catch large quantities and consequently specialised equipment was devised. Individual fishing was replaced by collective efforts involving larger, more effective gear. Fishing equipment and methods were improved through centuries. Mechanisation came to fishing in the 19th century. Small fishing boats became motorised at the

beginning of the 20th century.

In India, fishing habits trace back to the first inhabitants in the coastal belt. Fishermen of India, though illiterate, conservative and superstitious, are skilful in using devices for catching fish. They form the most important factor in developing the fishing industry as they possess innate knowledge and inborn qualities for fishing. However, they are socially and economically backward. Till recently, fishing has generally been considered as a low standard profession to be carried on exclusively by the lower-class people. The caste conscious Indian society gave only very little recognition to fishermen and the fishing industry.

In India, the importance of fisheries sector is well known as a provider of livelihood to more than six millions of people directly and indirectly and as a major foreign exchange earner. Development of several suitable technologies coupled with extension activities during the last 50 years increased Indian fish production manifold, particularly to occupy the second position in the global capture fish production. Presently the fisheries sector contributes about Rs.22200 crores to GDP, which is about 1.4 per cent of the total GDP and 4 per cent of production of the agricultural sector. In spite of its importance to the economy, the fishing community is one of the most backward classes both socially and economically.

#### **FISHING IN TAMILNADU:**

The maritime state of Tamil Nadu is blessed with 1,076 km long coast line and 41,412 sq.km continental shelf area with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.9 lakh sq. km, contributing 5.209 lakh tons of marine fish production. This supports the livelihood of 10.48 lakh marine fishers through 5,803 mechanised and 41,337 traditional fishing crafts which are actively engaged in fishing. Tamil Nadu possess 3.83 lakh ha. of effective inland water resources comprising reservoirs, major irrigation tanks, minor irrigation tanks, short seasonal tanks, ponds, rivers, backwaters and derelict water bodies. The inland fisher population is 2.35 lakh (2018-2019). An estimated brackish water area of 56,000 ha. is under capture fisheries and an area of 6115.68 ha. is under coastal aquaculture production, mainly shrimp aquaculture. Tamil Nadu is enriched with Marine, Brackish water and Inland fishery resources amenable for capture and culture fisheries. Substantial focus is being given on the economic and social dimensions of fishery resources by the Government of Tamil Nadu. The Indian Fisheries Act, 1897 enacted by the then Madras Presidency paved the way for the formulation of fisheries legislations across India. The Fisheries sector plays an important role in the socio-economic development of the country by providing livelihood to large number of fishers, generating employment opportunities in allied sectors and ensuring nutritional security.

The total fish production of the country in 2017-2018 was 12.59 million metric tonnes. India is the second largest producer of fish in the world and occupies the second position in inland fish production. The fisheries sector contributes 1% of the GDP of the country. Tamil Nadu ranks 4th in

total fish production of the country. Tamil Nadu exported 1,28,845 MT of marine products and earned a foreign exchange of Rs.5591.49 crore during 2018-2019.

The percapita consumption of fish in Tamil Nadu is 9.83 Kg as against the recommended requirement of 11.60 kg. With the increase in demand for fish, there is a need for augmenting the overall fish production of the State substantially from all the available fishery resources. However, aquaculture is emerging as a prominent activity for enhancing fish production and income generation in rural areas. Integration of fish culture with agriculture has proved to be an option for augmenting the unit productivity from aquaculture systems.

#### **FISHING IN THE STUDY AREA:**

Idinthakarai (Broken Shore) also known as Vidinthakarai (Shore of dawn) is a coastal village in Radhapuram Taluk in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu State. The eastern high rocky shore often breaks and falls on the sea shore. That is the reason why this village is called in this name. It is located about 12 km south of Radhapuram, and 27 km north east of Kanyakumari. It is about 650 km away from the state capital Chennai and 75 km from district capital Tirunelveli. The population of Idinthakarai is around 12000 to 13000. The nearest railway station to Idinthakarai is Aralvaimozhy (27 km). However, Vallioor Railway station (29 km) is used mainly because of its connectivity to Idinthakarai. Thiruvananthapuram International Airport (142 km) and Thoothukudi Domestic Airport (95 km) are the nearest airport. The nearest sea port is V.O.C port at Thoothukudi. Limited direct bus services to Idinthakarai are available from Tirunelveli, Vallioor, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari, Tiruchendur and Thoothukudi.

Most of the villagers are engaged in fishing and fish related industry. Some women are engaged in Beedi rolling. The village has two primary schools and one higher secondary school. Roman Catholics are majority and Hindus & Different group of Christian churches are minority. Idinthakarai first came into lime light 26 on 27th October 1967, when the Roman Catholic fishermen revolted against the church which taxed them and asked a bulk share of their earnings. Upset with the church these poor fishermen converted into Hinduism at the end of their 8 years long fight. The KKNP is the largest nuclear power plant in India. it has faced several oppositions from local residents and fishing communities in Idindakarai. The protestors claimed that the plant's effluent, discharged into the sea, releases toxin and impacts the quality of fish. They feared that the plant will take away their livelihood and that of future generation. The KKNP protest movement is unique among other people's movement because women have been heart of it. At the same time the government has filed more than 8000 sedition charges against these villagers, which is a world record.

A review of past studies is useful to understand the various aspects of the problem taken up for the research, to plan the current study effectively.

**Benet Rajadurai and Manickavasagam (2020)** in the study concluded that the socio-economic condition of the fishing community of the study area is very poor and miserable. Extensive and comprehensive area development programmes for the entire coastal belt is required to improve the socio-economic conditions of the fishing population.

**Kattungi Vijaya Sekhar (2020)** in his study stated that It is imperative to modernize the sector with diversified method of fishing with various new components related to exploitation of deep sea oceanic fishery resources.

**Polakshi Bhattacharyya Baruah and Pankaj Joyti Hazarika (2019)** in the study, “Socio-economic status of fishermen of Assam” stated that socioeconomic status are growing very rapidly with the help of various models given by planners. In spite of these, there are number of area, region, village etc. are having unbelievable socioeconomic status and not avail minimum basic needs for their living.

**Premapriya & Jeyaseelan (2018)** studied the socio-economic conditions and problems faced by women fishmonger in Puducherry. It was identified that most of the fish mongers are illiterate and lack of infrastructure and proper transportation are their prime problems. They are exploited by the middle men or money lenders; all the respondents have some health issues which are related to their fishing activity.

**Karuppasamy and Karthikeyan (2017)** in the study entitled, “A Study on Socio-Economic and cultural profile of fishermen in Puducherry region, India.” State that though there is tremendous increase in GDP from the fisheries sector during the last two decades, living conditions of fishermen all over India is still remains unchanged.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

The present study was conducted on economic conditions of fishermen in Idindakarai village of Tirunelveli district. Small scale fishermen are important participants in the economic activities of coastal fishery sector in Tirunelveli district. Even though fishing sector occupies a vital position in Indian economy, most of the fishermen are living in poverty. They are economically backward. They have no permanent and regular income. In Tirunelveli district, Idindakarai is one of the prominent fishing centres. In Idindakarai, the fishermen are confronted with a lot of economic problems. The present study analysing various problems encountered by the fishermen in Idindakarai. Despite dangerous nature of fishing occupation very little research have been conducted. The research on this group of population is limited. Their financial instability, low profile in socio-economic status brought them down to earth not allowing them to prosper in their life.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To find out the Quantum of fish catch by the fishermen
- To examine the income level of fishermen

**DATA COLLECTION:**

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions and evaluate outcomes. Primary data is collected through observations, mailed questionnaire, personal interviews, etc. Secondary data has been collected from websites, newspaper articles, government publications and censuses.

**SAMPLE SIZE:**

Sample size refers to the number of participants or observations included in a study. In this research project the sample size taken for the study is 50 respondents.

**SAMPLING METHOD:**

Sampling is a technique of selecting individual members or a subset of the population to make statistical inferences from them and estimate characteristics of the whole population. In this study Convenient random sampling is chosen.

**DATA INTERPRETATION:**

In this study an attempt is made to analyze the economic condition of fishermen in Idindakarai village of Tirunelveli district. The data collected through Interview schedule were tabulated and analyzed.

**AGE COMPOSITION:**

Age is one of the determining factors of ability to work of an individual. A society which has large number of children and old age people will suffer since their productive capacity is low. On the contrary a society will be better if it has large number of people in the young age group. The following table 1 gives the information about the age of respondents.

**Table 1 Age wise classification of fishermen**

S. No	Age [in years]	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 30	9	18
2	31-40	29	58
3	41-50	7	14
4	51-60	5	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

Table 1 reveals that 29(58 percent) of the respondents belonged to age group between 31 and 40 years, and only 5(10percent) of the respondents come under the age group of 51 and 60 years.

**OWNERSHIP OF BOAT:**

Among the fishermen, holding ownership of boat enjoys a higher status in the community. Hence an attempt is made to know whether the sample respondents are having their own boat or not and the results are given in the following table 2

**Table 2 Ownership of fishermen**

S. No	Ownership of Boat	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Owners	18	36
2	Labourers	32	64
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

The above table 2 shows that the majority 32(64 percent) respondents were labourers and 18(36percent) respondents have their own boats.

**INVESTMENT FOR BOAT:**

Investment for boat helps to analyze the expenditure. Investment for boat includes investment on nets, engine etc.

**Table 3 Investment for boat by fishermen**

S. No	Investment (in Rs.)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 5,00,000	7	39
2	Above 5,00,000	11	61
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

Of the 18 respondents of boat owners, 7(39 percent) respondents invested below 5 lakhs of Rupees on boat and 11(61 percent) respondents invested more than 5 lakhs of Rupees on boat.

**MONTHLY INCOME:**

Income is an important factor which determines the standard of living of the people. The following table 4 shows the details of income status of the sample fishermen.

**Table 4 Monthly Income of fishermen**

S. No	Monthly Income (in Rs.)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	5000-10000	22	44
2	11000-20000	19	38
3	21000-30000	7	14
4	Above 30000	2	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

Table shows that out of 50 respondents, 22 (44 percent) of the sample respondent's income is between Rs.5,000 and Rs.10,000 and only 2 (4 percent) respondents come under the income group of above Rs.30,000. From the data, it can be concluded that the average monthly income level of the sample respondents hardly sufficient to maintain their family at the subsistence level.

#### NUMBER OF FISHING DAYS:

Number of working days is an important determinant of income in fishing. Sunday is not a working day for fishermen in this village, they stay on the shore. Weather condition also determines the trip of fishermen. No. of working days is analyzed on an average in the below table 5.

**Table 5 Number of Fishing Days**

S. No	No. of fishing days	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 15	5	10
2	15-20	36	72
3	21-25	9	18
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

Of the 50 respondents, 36 (72 percent) respondents work for 15-20 days and 5 (10 percent) respondents work for 15 days and below.

#### QUANTUM OF CATCH:

Catch per trip is an important factor to calculate labour productivity in marine fishing. Catch per trip will not be similar for all days. Even though an average quantum of catch was analyzed.

**Table 6 Quantum of Catch**

S. No	Catch per trip (in kg)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	100-200	15	30
2	200-300	18	36
3	300-400	12	24
4	400-500	5	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

Of the 50 fishermen, 18 (36 percent) of them stated total catch per trip ranges between 200 kg and 300 k and 5 (10 percent) of them stated that total catch per trip ranges between 400 kg and 500 kg.

**FINDINGS:**

- Fifty eight percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-40 years.
- Sixty four percent of the respondents are laborers.
- Sixty one percent of the respondents invested more than Rs.5,00,000 for purchasing boat.
- Forty four percent of the respondent's monthly income ranges from Rs.5,000-Rs.10,000.
- Seventy two percent of the respondents work for 5-20 days. □
- Thirty six percent of the respondents stated that total catch per trip ranges between 200 kg and 300 kg.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- More technical devices should be introduced in the fisheries sector. It will enable the fishermen to catch more fish.
- The Government must provide fishing equipment to the fishermen at the subsidized cost.
- The Tamil Nadu Marine Fisheries Regulation Act must be strictly enforced to restrict the operation of mechanical boat in the inshore areas.

**CONCLUSION:**

Fishermen are the integral part of our society. Even though they provide excessive fish production and India is a major supplier of fish in the world, the full capacity in fish production is not utilised. There exist major difficulties in catching fish. Due to calamities mechanised boats often damaged. They don't have capital to reinvest. Again there come the problem of catching fish that Government is applying restrictive policies to catch during certain time period. Again when the fishermen unknowingly enter the border of other area they will be captured by them and jailed. With great effort only they can be rescued. Government has to see through it and has to save the life of fishermen.

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