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**ECONOMICS OF FISHERMEN IN AKOLA DISTRICT**

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**ABSTRACT**

Water is the mother of life, which is the universal solvent. Man, animals and plants cannot live without water. It is the primary medium for aquaculture and the health and growth of the aquatic organisms depends on the water quality. In case of inland fisheries, statistics for the area developed so far are not available, but it is known that only a fraction of the water area of 15 million acres under rivers, canals, jhils and tanks has been utilized. The present paper focuses on the fish seed production, the technological advances in fish seed production, different factors that govern the fish production, the economic status of Fisheries Co-operative Societies and fisherman. It was observed that presently available fisheries related infrastructure in Akola District is inadequate and needs financial impetus for improving the condition of fisheries co-operative societies and subsequently the society members.

**KEYWORDS**

Fisheries, financial impetus, Water.

**INTRODUCTION**

Water is the mother of life, which is the universal solvent. Man, animals and plants cannot live without water. It is the primary medium for aquaculture and the health and growth of the aquatic organisms depends on the water quality. Like other populations, fish populations also show definite upper and lower limits of density in an ecosystem, at any one moment of time. (Jayaram, K.C. 2002) Fish population does not occur in isolation. It is very much a part of the ecosystem where it is bound to be influenced by other communities of organisms of the biological system to keep the fish population in a state of equilibrium resisting fluctuations. This aquatic ecosystem for a given fish community may be operating under human protection and control (fish culture ponds) or without it under wild conditions (lakes, streams, rivers, estuaries, swamps, coastal, off-shore and deep-sea waters). Fisheries and agricultural farming have evolved rather parallel in the history of human civilization. (Talwar and Jhingran., 1991) Interest in fish eating dates back to the dawn of history. Fishery science is often referred to as a super science.

**FISHERIES**

Fisheries in India, though very under-developed, contribute annually about Rs. 10 crores to the national income. (Datta and Shrivastva., 1988, Gadgil and Guha., 1992) Rich in proteins, vitamins and mineral salts, fish is a valuable protective food. It forms an important constituent of the diet over considerable areas. The development of fisheries is, therefore, one of the most promising means of improving the diet of the people.

**FISH PRODUCTION TRENDS**

The inadequacy and inaccuracy of the existing statistics for fisheries have been emphasized by several committees. The Report on the marketing of fish published by the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection is the principle source of information. Some useful data about the marine fisheries has been recently collected by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Station. (Saundersen *et. al.*, 2001) The technical committee on the coordination of fisheries statistics has examined the question of statistics in detail. Its report was published in 1950 and it is a hope now that with the implementation of its recommendations by the Central and State Governments the position will steadily improve.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A literature review was carried out to identify the previous research efforts and directions related to our focal area. The objective was to identify the research gaps and highlight research motivations. Wherever possible an attempt has been made to present the discussions in a chronological order, so that the review also indicates the underlying pattern of evolution of thoughts and ideas in that domain. Similarly, to the extent possible, care was taken to reproduce the original terminology used by the authors, to preserve the originality of the views. The literature review addressed various issues encompassing the field of fisheries in relation to the performance of fisheries co-operative societies, the issues pertaining to fisheries on global as well as local level. Various domains of the study have been reviewed in a systematic manner.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the economic status of Fisheries Co-operative Societies and Fisherman.
2. To study the social status of Fisherman.
3. To study the total income of Fisheries Co-operative Societies and Retail Fish Traders from total Fish production.
4. To study general problems faced by fishermen.

**MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Survey method was adopted for collection of relevant data. The data was collected using a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire development process was carried by following standard procedure. The process of developing the research instrument for this study was based on generally accepted psychometric principles of instrument design, and was carried out according to the following steps:

- Identification of Critical Factors (in view of the objectives)
- Initial Selection of Items
- Final Selection of Items and Development of Instrument
- Reliability Estimation of Empirical Instrument
- Validity (Content validity, Criterion-related validity and Construct validity)
- Pilot Study

**SAMPLE SIZE**

District	Fisheries Co-operative Society	Fish Traders	Lakes	Fish Sellers
Akola	34	100	88	50

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The data generated during the present study was processed using various statistical tests with the aid of SPSS 18.0 statistical software. The reliability was estimated using SPSS 18.0 software. The data characteristics (descriptive statistics), such as mean, standard deviation, standard error, frequency, percentage, minimum and maximum, etc. were determined. The comparative assessment was done using 'Z' test as well as suitable graphs.

**SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL**

The significance level was chosen to be 0.05 (or equivalently, 5%) by keeping in view the consequences of such an error and to make the significance level as small as possible in order to protect the null hypothesis and to prevent, as far as possible, from inadvertently arriving at false conclusions.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

By following the above mentioned steps, a reliable and valid research instrument was constructed. Based on the detailed statistical analysis of data it was found that that majority of fishermen aged between 50 and 60 yrs. with education up to 4<sup>th</sup> Std. and are not well educated living in nuclear families. They are involved in animal husbandry and agricultural farming as their sub profession in addition to fisheries.

The annual income of majority of fishermen varies from Rs. 20,000/- to Rs. 30,000/-. Fishermen of Akola District earn an average of Rs. 10,000/- from other earning sources viz. an average annual income of Rs. 10,000/- daily wages working as a labour, Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- from other miscellaneous sources. Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) difference in the income from all the income sources. The data recorded from the fishermen of Akola District reveals that majority of fishermen possess own piece of land (majority has <4 acres of land) and rain fed land. They do not have any permanent job and are not registered members of any savings group. These suggest that the income from fisheries was sufficient to meet their needs; however, there was no improvement in their living standard.

The data from the fishermen of Akola District indicates that majority of fishermen receive benefit from the various fisheries development schemes of Maharashtra Government and are dependent on lakes for fishing. There are no adequate number of cold storage, and ice factories. Majority (85.3%) of fishermen of Akola District stated that they did not receive any fisheries related training. The data recorded from the fishermen of Akola District reveals that 47.2% fishermen do not have detailed information of the various fisheries development schemes of Maharashtra Government.

In case of inland fisheries, statistics for the area developed so far are not available, but it is known that only a fraction of the water area of 15 million acres under rivers, canals, jhils and tanks has been utilized. (Kar *et al.*, 2006) The back water and estuarine fisheries are still very largely under- developed. Currently, the water resources are being exploited mainly for reasons, such as, (1) for employment generation (2) food security, (3) source of income. (Charles and Martin., 1995) Although, there are numerous Government schemes for improvement of the fisheries in India, the benefit does not seem to have percolated up to the last person. However, still many fishermen are living below poverty line.

It would also be necessary to classify culturable waters into (1) those that can be utilised for fish culture without any expensive measures for their improvement and (2) derelict waters which would require a large capital outlay for improvement. (Berkman and Rabeni., 1987). For States which are at present deficit in fish seed resources, supplies would have to be arranged from surplus areas, where large-scale collection and distribution of fish seed would have to be organised. Large wastages occur in the transport of fingerlings and fry. (Onogawa., 2007) Fisheries management draws on fisheries science in order to find ways to protect fishery resources so sustainable exploitation is possible. (Morita *et al.*, 2002) Modern fisheries management is often referred to as a governmental system of appropriate management rules based on defined objectives and a mix of management means to implement the rules, which are put in place by a system of monitoring control and surveillance.

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