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PERFORMANCE OF FISH WORKERS COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES**A. NALINI****GUEST LECTURER****P.G. & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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THIRU.VI.KA. GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE
TIRUVARUR****ABSTRACT**

Fish workers can be defined as individual enhanced in fishing and related activities such as fish processing and trade and rely as their main livelihood activity. Specifically, fish workers can be distinguished into two sub-groups, namely, fishers and fish traders. The fish workers living along the coastline of the Tamilnadu and particularly along the coastline in Nagappattinam district have tradition of fishing which dates back to several centuries. The centuries of living by the sea have equipped them with rare talents needed for fishing. The sea is only a natural extension of their life. The productivity of traditional fish workers is comparatively low. Socio-economic condition of fishermen community has to be improved to a large extent. The social outlook of the majority of the fishermen has not changed perceptibly. They are still under the old beliefs and ideals, which are initial to their growth, therefore every effort, should be made to instill progressive ideals in the minds of fishermen especially.

KEYWORDS

fish workers, co-operative societies.

INTRODUCTION

Fishing communities comprise of both fish workers and their households. Fish workers can be defined as individual enhanced in fishing and related activities such as fish processing and trade and rely as their main livelihood activity. Specifically, fish workers can be distinguished into two sub-groups, namely, fishers and fish traders. Fishers generally include individuals who are directly engaged in fishing (for example, vessel owners, managers, operators and crew members). On the other hand, fish traders include those who buy and sell and/or processed fish.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The fish workers living along the coastline of the Tamilnadu and particularly along the coastline in Nagappattinam district have tradition of fishing which dates back to several centuries. The centuries of living by the sea have equipped them with rare talents needed for fishing. The sea is only a natural extension of their life. The productivity of traditional fish workers is comparatively low. Several factors contributed to the low productivity, to mention a few, the financial constraints, lack of mechanized sea-faring boats, lack of marketing processing facilities etc. But there is enormous scope for developing fishing industry in Nagappattinam District. Such a development will provide gainful employment to both fish workers and non-fish workers help in the socio-economic development and non-Government agencies have been involved in the development of fisheries and fishermen of Nagappattinam district for quite some time. But, there is no visible improvement or telltale signs of improvement in the socio-economic condition of fishermen. So, this study is undertaken to document the socio-economic conditions as well as the problems faced by the fishermen. Further this study seeks to analyze the working of cooperatives, Government organizations and non-governmental organizations, which are involved in the development of fish workers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study socio-economic conditions of fish workers in the Nagappattinam District.
2. To evaluate the performance of fish worker's cooperative societies in Tamil Nadu.
3. To study the role of Central and State Governments as well as Non-Governmental Organizations in the promotion of fish workers in Nagappattinam District.
4. To make suggestions and to improve the welfare of the fishermen to increase fish production.

METHODOLOGY

Survey method is to be adopted for the study. Data for the study is to be collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data will be collected from the 300 members selected from 10 coastal villages in Nagappattinam District of Tamil Nadu State. The secondary data will be collected from the apex level federation of Fishery Cooperatives, Directorate of Fisheries, district level Fishery Cooperative federation and from 10 selected Fishery Cooperative Societies and 4 Non-Governmental Organizations of Nagappattinam District of Tamil Nadu State.

TOOLS

Questionnaires for the respondents will be constructed on the basis of a pilot study conducted in the study area. The questions will be reframed in certain cases and some questions relating to their socio-economic conditions is to be added and certain questions which are found unnecessary will be deleted. The questionnaires were tested for their validity and reliability before their application.

Interviews will be conducted with the help of questionnaires among the members of the selected cooperatives and also managerial personnel of the societies to get firsthand knowledge relating to the various problems of fish workers, welfare schemes, economic conditions of fish workers, problems of cooperative societies etc. Collected Data are analyzed with the help of standard statistical tools. Average, percentage, index numbers and growth rates etc. were used to analyze quantitative data.

SAMPLING

In the first stage two villages each of the 5 coastal taluks, were selected giving due weightage to fishing population of these villages.

In the second stage 30 fish workers will be selected from each fishing village making it a total 300 sample respondents. As the pilot study as well as Marine Fisherfolk Census (TN) revealed considerable uniformity in the socio-economic background of the fish workers in the Nagappattinam district the sample size of 300 is to be considered adequate.

COOPERATIVE OPERATIONS

The fish collected from the sea would have to be assembled, graded, pooled to the extent possible stored and transported to the appropriate markets quickly and at reasonable cost. Active participation in the selling operations through auctions should ensure remunerative prices to the participating fishermen. Normally, the service charges of cooperative on account of storage transport commission etc. should be lower than those offered by the basis of increased scale of operations. If the society is able to meet the initial financial needs and problems of members in disposing of fish and fish products remunerative price in appropriate markets and in the most suitable forms their localities can be arranged without much resistance because the returns by way of prices, bonus etc. would be much larger than they would have got through the private agencies. The success of private agencies had been mainly on account of their arrangement at the market level which in value high level of exploitation on the side of economic returns of fishermen. A comparative structure aim at closing these loopholes by organized marketing for better pricing and at reasonable costs for their members.

The Cooperative must insist on the regulation of fish markets where suitable conditions for fair price evolution largely through auctions and regulations of marketing formalities and practices in which the cooperatives themselves can participate for giving better prices to their members. Better prices can be also secured by entering into long-term contracts with the organized institutions (e.g large processing factories) if cooperative are not available. There can also be sub-contracting arrangement between a cooperative and its members.

SUGGESTIONS

Socio-economic condition of fishermen community has to be improved to a large extent. The social outlook of the majority of the fishermen has not changed perceptibly. They are still under the old beliefs and ideals, which are initial to their growth, therefore every effort, should be made to instill progressive ideals in the minds of fishermen especially.

Another neglected aspect in fisheries sector economy is their education literacy rates are very high in this village. This coupled with the arresting education at the primary level seems to be the stumbling block of the further development. This village people have only the middle school and have not got even library facilities.

Housing condition of the most of the fishermen households is really sympathetic. Most of them live in thatched houses, which do not stand at the time of storm, wind and cyclone, which created considerable damage to the fishermen households. Though the scheme of colonization of fishermen is operated in the villages, housing plan given does not seem to be adequate to construct houses. Therefore, it is suggested that they should implement a comprehensive scheme providing adequate financial assistance to construct pucca houses for fishermen.

The size of the family also seems to be large which too affect the standard of living fishermen. Therefore, efforts should be made to spread the message of family planning to these families.

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