
Socio Economic Status Of The Fishermen In Tharuvaikulam At Thoothukudi District From 2020 To 2022 □ A Study

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ABSTRACT

Fishing is one of humanity's first economic occupations. It is all about farming. Fish and other seafood are an appealing component of a healthy diet. Millions of individuals throughout the world have been successful in fishing and fish trade over the years. The primary goal of the study is to better understand the fishermen's socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as their incomes, expenses, and catches before and after COVID-19 in Tharuvaikulam village. The study used both primary and secondary data. The study involved 150 randomly chosen fishing households from Tharuvaikulam village. The chi-square test revealed a significant difference in the monthly data. The sample size was 15%. Percentage analysis, mean, chi-square test, and probability analysis were employed. According to the findings, the average monthly income of fishing households in Tharuvaikulam village, Tuticorin district, was Rs. 3,041.67 before to COVID 19 and Rs. 3,380.95 after COVID 19. The current study suggests that a lack of knowledge and feasible alternative livelihood programs are significant hurdles to improving their socioeconomic condition and endangers the sustainable use of fishery resources...

KEYWORDS: fisherman, gross domestic product, transmission, transport

INTRODUCTION

Fishing is one of humanity's earliest economic occupations. It is all about farming. Fish and seafood contribute to a healthy diet. Millions of individuals throughout the world have been successful in fishing and fish trade over the years. Pisces and Fishermen are very close and connected. They go to the water, remain, seek, catch fish, spend nights, take risks, face uncertainty, and brave courageously and successfully.¹ Despite their rightful quest for water, their efforts may not always be appreciated by others. There are several challenges and riddles that persist. It is both a serious problem and a contradiction. The primary goal of the research is to better understand the fishermen's socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as their incomes, expenses, and catches before to and following COVID-19 in Tharuvaikulam village.

Fishing in Tamil Nadu

According to the 2001 Indian census, Tamil Nadu has around 6.79 lakh fisherman. There are 3.48,000 males and 3.31,000 women. The literacy rate is around 61 percent. These fishermen folk workers primarily use traditional methods.² Some employ contemporary automated boats with advanced technology. In 2021-22, around 5.70 million tons of fish from various species were taken and sold off the coasts of Coramandal, Palk Bay, and the Gulf of Manner. The Thoothukudi district has a 163.5 km shoreline along the Gulf of Manner, part of the coastal chain.³ It is officially anticipated that in 2021-22, about 27,453 fishermen and 15,000 families would live and work in the study region. The fishermen are concentrated in around 12 settlements, each with eight fisherman's blocks..

Fishing in Tuticorin District □ Tharuvaikulam Fishing Village

Tuticorin District is situated in southern Tamil Nadu, in the Gulf of Mannar area between India and Sri Lanka. The Tuticorin district comprises 21 fishing communities and over 70,000 residents. Tuticorin, often known as the "city of pearls," was founded by the Portuguese, occupied by the Dutch, and then transferred to the British. The city is also noted for its cutting. The Gulf of Mannar region has a higher fish population density and diversity than the Coromandel Coast and Palk Strait regions.⁴ It is home to around 450 of India's 2200 fish species (20%). According to UNDP (1999), this is India's most fish-rich coastline region. Tharuvaikulam is a fishing hamlet located near Tuticorin on the southeast coast of Tamil Nadu. Gill net fishing is conducted offshore. Tharuvaikulam is open practically year-round. *Portunuspelagicus*, a swimming crab, is often the most common capture. Lobsters may also be found in high quantities in the teeth. The lobster fishery off Tharuvaikulam consists of two species: *Panidirusomatus* and *P. homarus*. There is insufficient information available on crawfish resources in the Gulf of Mannar.

The principal species caught here are mackerel, tuna, pomfret, shark, cod, flatfish, redfish, catfish, shrimp, lobster, and crab. Their fall in the 1960s was mostly due to human and natural forces. Traditional fishermen make up the majority of the fishing population, although the mechanized industry contributes significantly to catch volume and export revenues (Government of Tamil Nadu, 2000). It is also one of the rare locations where the Tamil Nadu Marine Fisheries Regulation Act is properly followed. Fishing is typically done during the week, with Sunday being a public holiday due to Roman Catholic beliefs among both traditional and trawler fisherman in the region.⁵ The vessels utilized are catamarans, vallams, and motorized boats, which are classified into two groups based on size. These vessels utilize gillnets, creels, hooks and lines, boat seines, trawls, and so on (trawls are the only active gears, the rest are passive gears).

In Tharuvaikulam, boats depart around 1:00 am and return at 5:00 pm during the non-closed season (June). Beginning In August, they leave around 5:30am and return at midnight. Local artisanal fishers are legally supposed to adhere to precise timekeeping, however this has not been achieved. In Thiruvaikulam, village fishermen employ motorized vessels rather than trawling. Instead, they solely employ passive fishing equipment like gillnets. Tharuvaikulam village fishermen are concerned about the negative impact of bottom trawling on the benthic ecology.

Bottom trawling has a negative influence on both the marine ecology and fishermen themselves. Learn about traditional fishing equipment and techniques. To minimize potential disputes between the two sectors, they implemented a self-imposed restriction on trawling. The self-imposed restriction on the use of gillnets by automated boats has minimized friction at the local level, even in shared fishing grounds.⁶ The panchayat resolves any conflicts that arise. Those who violate the terms of local agreements are penalized by having their ships barred from the water for an extended length of time. Fear of exclusion from one's own community plays a significant role in the success of these local accords. Fishermen from other areas are likewise not permitted to trawl near Tharuvaikulam. However, the agreement between the two sectors appears to have been informal rather than official.

Goals

The study's key objectives are stated below.

- Researching the socioeconomic background of fisherman from Tharuvaikulam village.
- Understand the fishing gear used by fisherman.
- Vehicle inspection
- Evaluating fishermen's monthly earnings before and after COVID-19
- Making effective suggestions based on research findings.

Age rating of respondents

The survey found a larger number of middle-aged respondents (63%). As per the poll, the participation of the research region has a larger proportion of middle-aged fisherman compared to older or younger ones.

Respondents' level of education

The majority of responders, 55.9 percent out of 5643, finished primary school. Approximately 23.2% had a Realschule certificate and 13.1% a Hochschule certificate. The illiteracy rate was merely 7.7%.

Family Size

Over 40% of families (45.8%) had five or more people, whereas 7.5% had four. Approximately 16.7% had three members.

Reasons for fishing activities

A study of the same group of fisherman revealed that their attitude towards the primary motivation for fishing in the research region is financial gain, followed by family support, tradition, self-interest, and unemployment.⁷

Livestock farming

Animal husbandry provides an additional source of income. Approximately 16.1% of fisherman raised goats/sheep, whereas 28.6% did. Approximately 55.4% of them raised cattle, while others kept poultry.

Covid-19 impacts on the fisheries sector

During India's shutdown, the Tamil Nadu administration, like most state regimes, exercised complete control over fishing. March 24, 2020 until April 14, 2020. Fisheries, unlike agriculture, were not deemed vital accommodations. After fishermen protested, the Indian Regime eased restrictions and offered a model. On April 10, 2020, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) will include maritime fisheries, aquaculture, fish kinetics, and personnel along the value chain. Inland fisheries will follow on April 15, 2020. The SOP included authorizations for all phases of fishing activities, including pre-departure, while fishing, at arrival, and post-harvest/conveyance. The SOP seeks to improve fisher safety and cleanliness (Department of Fisheries, 2020).

Fishing resumed under crisis management committees led by fishermen. Owners of fishing vessels are sodalities. Local institutions (urpanchayats and fisher organizations) set their own limits. The fishing economy was affected in several ways, notwithstanding the quantitative data. According to Kurien (2020), the fisheries sector in India is operating at less than one-third capacity, resulting in a monthly loss of around 6,700 crore.⁸ All fishermen' livelihoods (mechanized and small-scale) were harmed as a result of the lockdowns, as well as transportation issues and safety concerns when fishing was eventually permitted (Vohra, 2020). Trawl fishing did not begin until June due to the two-month fishing prohibition (15 April-14 June). Fishers aboard mechanized vessels were unable to work until June due to the two-month fishing season. During the lean fishing season on the East Coast and Gulf nations, migrant fishermen from other parts of India were left stranded aboard vessels without pay. The post-harvest industry was equally hit. Exporters, wholesalers, auctioneers, and small-scale seafood sellers suffered losses owing to diminishing marketplaces and transportation facilities.

Immediate relief measures in the Covid-19 Context

The lockdown and local limitations were mitigated by steps made by the government, community institutions, and fishermen. Organisations and individual vessel owners. This includes the following: Fisher families, like all households with ration cards, were eligible for the 1,000 mitigation allowance provided by the Regime of Tamil Nadu. During the lockdowns, fishermen enrolled with the Tamil Nadu Fishermen Welfare Board received two extra payments of 1,000 (equivalent to 2,000). During the two-month prohibition, all fishermen got a 5,000 payout. Some villages and neighborhoods received rations from local institutions like urpanchayats and fisher organizations, but others did not. Others asked fishermen to prioritize supplying seafood to local homes first. Vessel owners regularly took out loans to supply meals to fishers on board. Fishers deemed these quantifications insufficient. The government's mitigation plan did not cover the average incomes of fishermen and seafood workers. The Tamil Nadu Fishermen Welfare Board does not provide adequate support for vulnerable populations, including women fish merchants.

Conclusion

People living along the Tuticorin the community of Tharuvaikulam in the Gulf of Mannar relies heavily on fishing. They require resources to sustain themselves. Lack of knowledge and feasible alternative livelihood initiatives hinder socio-economic progress and risk the sustainability of fishing resources. Raising knowledge of alternative livelihood options in this community has led to increased interest in protecting, conserving, and managing fish resources for future generations.

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