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PROBLEMS OF INLAND FISH CULTIVATORS – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TOTRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

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Abstract

Aquaculture is a rapidly growing fisheries sector in India with an annual growth rate of over 7%. Inland fishing has an important role on the socio-economic development of the developing countries. Fishing is not only a source of income but also provider of necessary nutrients to our body. The fisheries sector plays a vital role in the economy by providing food & employment to millions of people**.** It is one of the fastest growing food production sectors in the world. The main objectives of the study is to explore the problems of inland fish cultivators in Trivandrum District. The present study has been based on primary data collected from the fishermen. The data has been collected with the help of the questionnaire and the respondents are selected by convenience sampling. The sample size for the study is 100 fishermen. It is found that the important problems of fish cultivators are weather, finance, labour, technical guidance, storage, transportation, quality issues etc. The problems of fish cultivators could be solved easily with the help of co-operative societies and Government.

Key Words: Fishermen, Livelihood, Inland cultivation.

Introduction

Fishing is one of the oldest means of livelihood. Gradually, it has developed into an occupation to a large number of people called “fishermen”. Fish and fish products constitute the most important source of protein food in the daily diet of most of the people around the world and especially in the State of Kerala. It has already been pointed out that the State is endowed with immense fresh water resources. Besides, there are estuaries, backwaters, brackish water area, pokkali & prawn filtration fields and private shrimp farms. All these bodies of water provide rich sources of inland fisheries. Inland fish production provides significant contribution to animal protein supplies in rural areas of the State. Most of the inland production is consumed locally and marketed domestically.

Statement of the problem

With the passage of time, the fishing activities have developed as an important occupation for a large member of people called “Fishermen.” Fish being a highly perishable commodity, its marketing assumes special significance. Fish and fishery products attract high consumer

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preference and increasing demand all over the world. During the study different kinds of obstacles were identified such as weather, finance, labour, transport, storage, delay in payment etc. These facilities are generally not available up to their desired expectations and the fishermen face more problems. Hence the researcher attempted to study the problems of fish cultivators in Trivandrum District.

Objectives

1. To know the profile of inland fish cultivators.
2. To explore the problems of inland fish cultivators in Trivandrum District, to offer suitable suggestions based on the findings of the study.

Scope

The present study examines the problems of inland fish cultivators with special reference to Trivandrum district. The focus is, however, on analysing the problems of cultivators.

Methodology

The study includes the sampling method, sample size and collection of data. The present study has been based on primary data collected from the fishermen. The data has been collected with the help of the questionnaire and the respondents are selected by convenience sampling. The sample size for the study is 100 fishermen.

Tools used for Analysis

For the current study simple percentage analysis and LIKERTS five-point method has been used.

Limitations of the study:

1. There has been no significant study conducted on the problems of the fish cultivators; so there exists a wide data gap or blank past in this regard. This study must be essentially seen as a starting point in attempting to reveal the facts of a marginalized community.
2. Non-availability of sufficient and reliable secondary data is one of the major limitations of the study. In the absence of proper records, the study exclusively depends on data provided by the participants regarding their conditions.

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Analysis and interpretation

Table 1 - Age wise Distribution

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 30	10	10
31-40	35	35
41-50	30	30
Above 50	25	25
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table.1 reveals that 35 per cent are in the age group of 31 to 40, 30 per cent are in the age group of 41 to 50 years, 25 per cent are in the age group of above 50 years and 10 per cent are in the age group of below 30 years. It denotes that most of the fishermen involved in Trivandrum district are 31 to 40 years of age and the persons below 30 years of age are rarely involved in the study area.

Table 2 - Marital Status

Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Married	80	80
Unmarried	20	20
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table.2 reveals that 80 per cent are married and 20 per cent are unmarried. It divulges that married individuals are highly involved in fish cultivators in Trivandrum district.

Table 3 - Family System

Family System	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Joint Family	40	40
Nuclear Family	60	60
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table.3 reveals that 60 per cent belong to nuclear family and 40 per cent belong to joint family. Thus, it is concluded that most of the fishermen in the study area are living in nuclear families.

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Table 4 - Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	28	28
Up to 5th	20	20
5th to 8	25	25
SSLC-HSC	22	22
Undergraduate	05	5
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 shows that 28 per cent are illiterate, 25 per cent are 5th standard to 8th standard, 22 per cent are SSLC to HSC educational qualification, 20 per cent are up to 5th standard and 5 per cent are undergraduates. It is evident from table that majority of the respondents are illiterate in the study area.

Table 5 - Monthly Income

Monthly Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below Rs.5000	30	30
Rs.5000 – Rs.10000	40	40
Rs.10000 – Rs.20000	20	20
Above Rs.20000	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 clearly shows that 40 per cent earn a monthly income of Rs.5000 to Rs.10000. 30 per cent earn a monthly income of below Rs.5000. 20 per cent earn a monthly income of Rs.10000 to Rs.20000 and 10per cent earn a monthly income of above Rs.20000. It is evident from table that majority of the respondents earn a monthly income of Rs.5000 to Rs.10000.

Table 6 - Number of years

Number of Years Involved in Fishing	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 1 Year	08	8
1 to 5 YEARS	20	20
5 to 10 years	30	30
Above 10 Years	42	42
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 reveals that 42 per cent have been involved in fishing for above 10 years, 30 per cent have been involved in fishing for 5 to 10 years, 20 per cent have been involved in fishing for 1 to 5 years and 8 have been involved in fishing for below 1 year.

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Table 7 - Types of fishing

Type of Fishing	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Mechanized	70	70
Non-Mechanized	30	30
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 7 reveals that 70 per cent belong to mechanized type of fishing and 30 per cent belong to non-mechanized type of fishing.

Table 8 - Fishing period

Fishing Period in a Year	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 100 Days	20	20
100 – 200 Days	25	25
Above 200 Days	55	55
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 shows that majority of 55 per cent of the respondents are involved in fishing for 200 days above in a year. The fishing period in a year is found to be between 100 and 200 days for 25 per cent of the respondents while the remaining 20 per cent of the respondents have a fishing period of below 100 days. It reveals that most of the respondents could be engaged in fishing for a period of 200 days or more.

Table 9 - Problems of inland fish cultivators

Problems of inland fish cultivators	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Total	Rank
Weather	50 (250)	20 (80)	11(33)	8 (16)	11 (11)	100 (390)	**III**
Labour	35 (175)	24 (96)	14(42)	15 (30)	12 (12)	100 (355)	**VIII**
Finance	60 (300)	24 (96)	5(15)	6 (12)	5 (5)	100 (428)	**I**
Baby fishes	30 (150)	40 (160)	10(30)	12(24)	8 (8)	100 (372)	**V**
Technical guidance	40 (200)	30 (120)	8(24)	10 (20)	12 (12)	100 (376)	**IV**
Storage problems	45 (225)	30 (120)	4(12)	15 (30)	6 (6)	100 (393)	**II**
Transportation	25 (125)	40 (160)	8(24)	10 (20)	17 (17)	100 (346)	**IX**
Price fluctuations	30 (180)	42 (168)	5(15)	13 (26)	10 (10)	100 (369)	**VI**
Delay in Payment	24 (120)	35 (140)	12 (36)	14 (28)	15(15)	100 (339)	**X**
Over expectation by middlemen	30 (150)	40 (160)	8 (24)	12 (24)	10 (10)	100 (368)	**VII**

Source: Primary Data

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SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, DA-Disagree and SDA-Strongly Disagree The above table depicts that "finance" secures first rank whereas that the "delay in payment" secures least rank.

Suggestions:

1. In order to reduce the problems of fish cultivators, they should be provided with good storage facilities, proper preservation facilities with a view to preserve the fish because of its perishable nature.
2. In order to enhance the level of satisfaction, the society has to take steps to collect the fish at the catching point. The price for fish should be fixed reasonably and should be disbursed at the earliest. The society should accept the different varieties of fish.
3. Awareness programmes should be conducted to tackle the different problems of cultivators.
4. The government should provide training to the cultivators for increasing their skills.
5. The infrastructure facility should be improved and government should take various steps to solve the problems faced by the inland fish cultivators.

Conclusion:

The fishery industry is an important part of the economy, sufficient research studies have not been done in this area to unveil the problems and prospects of the fishery industry in the district. This is the reason why the present study was undertaken. In absence of large-scale industrialization, agriculture has been playing the pivotal role by offering means of livelihood to the majority of the working populace of the district. They should come across with certain difficulties in proper assistance. The consumption of fish seems to be increasing all over the world. Fish and fish products are becoming popular among the youngsters. The problems of cultivators need to be solved by the Government and the co-operative society by increasing its quality of services. It results in the enhancement of level of satisfaction of fishermen towards the society. The role of co-operative fisheries in the provision of various services to the fishing community is considered remarkable. The infrastructure facility like storage facility, transportation facility, etc. should be improved so that the problems of the cultivators could be solved easily.

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