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EMPOWERMENT OF COASTAL DRY FISH WOMEN VENDORS IN TUTICORIN DISTRICT

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empowerment of dry fish vending has resulted in greater access to financial resources outside the household and increased access and 91.1% respondents were of the observation that control over resources at the household level. Further 71.1 per cent of them stated that economic empowerment has resulted in reduced vulnerability of the women crisis and 93.3% respondents were of the view that increased financial self-reliance of women. As the calculated value of Chi-square is greater than the table value at 5 per cent level of significance, there is a relationship in the awareness of economic empowerment of dry fish vending and their level of perception of the respondents in the study area. The results obtained from this survey revealed that the living conditions of respondents remain poor and almost unchanging in recent years. Off-season unemployment is more in the selected coastal villages of Tuticorin District. Concerted action by government agencies, local

ABSTRACT

Women in fishing communities also play an important role in fish production and processing across the world. Their role encompasses social and economic responsibilities, both within and outside the family. Present study was an attempt to understand the living conditions and economic empowerment of dry fish women vendors in Tuticorin District. In order to perform the analysis on the socio-economic status of the dry fish women vendors, the coastal areas Thoothukudi district such as Thalamuthunagar, Vellapatti, Therespuram, Arockiapuram & Inigo

Nagar were selected. The simple random sampling technique was used. Secondary data have been collected from books, journals, newspapers, internet and periodicals. Percentage analysis, averages, standard deviation, t test, chi square test, Gini coefficient, and probability analysis were used. The data relate to the month of September 2016.

The Gini ratio was estimated to analyse the distribution of household income of the respondents before and after selling dry fish in the study area. Economic empowerment is the initial aspect of women development. 86.7% respondents were of the view that the economic

bodies, trade unions, and voluntary organization with the active support, co-operation and participation of the respondents is required for solving the issues and for the growth and development of the sector.

KEYWORDS: *empowerment, gender equality, decision-making, vulnerability, trade unions, co-operation.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, gender equality and women's empowerment have been recognized as crucial to the health and socio-economic development of entire country, not just individual families. This is evident in the fact that promotion of gender equality and empowering women is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (Millennium Development Goals, 2001). The indicators of empowerment are designed to measure roles, attitudes, and rights of women in society. At the household level, disempowerment of women results in their lower access to education, employment and income and limits their participation in decision making (IIPS, 2007).

It is a widely accepted fact that poverty has a gender bias, as 70% of the people living in abject poverty are women (Dehadrai, 2002). It is reported that women perform 2/3 rd of the world's work, receive only 10% of world's income and own only one per cent of the total assets (Ashaletha et.al., 2002). The UNDP has developed a gender empowerment measure (GEM) which focuses on three variables that reflect women's participation in society-political power or decision-making, education, and health (United Nations Development programme, 2011).

Women in fishing communities also play an important role in fish production and processing across the world. Their role encompasses social and economic responsibilities, both within and outside the family. It was found that women's participation in aquaculture was recognized by many researchers and practitioners (Nwabueze, 2010). Shalesha and Stanley (2000) reported that women perform important functions in the fisheries of most Asian and African countries. However, rural fishing women live in poverty with no purchasing power, and suffer from malnutrition due to low protein intake (Nwabueze, 2010).

The marine fish production in Tamil Nadu during the year 2012 was estimated at 5.17 lakh tones, of which the mechanized units contributed 59 per cent (CMFRI, 2013). Women constitute about 40 per cent of the labour force involved in shrimp farm activities in Tamil Nadu (Gopalakrishnan, 1996). The fishing community is mostly dependent on the fishery resources for livelihood and the roles that fisherwomen play in this respect are of great importance for the maintenance of the family (Shaleesha, K, 1997). Present study was an attempt to understand the living conditions and economic empowerment of dry fish women vendors in Tuticorin District.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are mentioned below:

- 1.To study the socio economic background of the dry fish women vendors in Tuticorin District
- 2.To know the living conditions of the respondents.
- 3.To examine the Primary Health Care facility of the respondents
- 4.To evaluate the monthly income and expenditure of the respondents
- 5.To find out the relation between economic empowerment and their level of perception of dry fish vending.

METHODOLOGY

In order to perform the analysis on the socio – economic status of the dry fish women vendors, the coastal areas Thoothukudi district such as Thaalammuthunagar, Vellapatti, Therespuram, Arockiapuram & Inigo Nagar were selected. Primary data relating to the socio economic background of the dry fish women vendors were collected through pre-designed questionnaire from 275 dry fish women vendors from the selected villages. The study covered 55 respondents from each village chosen at random. The data collected from these sample respondents has been carefully processed, edited and tabulated for analytical purposes. The simple random sampling technique was used. Secondary data have been collected from books, journals, newspapers, internet and periodicals. Percentage analysis, averages, standard deviation, t test, chi square test, Gini coefficient, and probability analysis were used. The data relate to the month of September 2016.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from the primary source has been tabulated and this forms the major basis for the research study. The study covered 275 women respondents from Thaalammuthunagar, Vellapatti, Therapuram, Arockiapuram & Inigo Nagar coastal villages chosen at random. The sample size was 15%.

Table 1
SIZE OF THE FAMILY

Size	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 3	24	8.73
3 – 5	61	22.18
5 and above	190	69.09
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It was found that more than a 190 of the families (69.09%) had five and above members, about 22.18% had three - four members and about 8.73% had below three members.

Table 2
AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

Age (in years)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 19	24	8.73
20-29	67	24.36
30-39	82	29.82
40-49	57	20.73
50-59	26	9.45
Above 60	19	6.91
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

In the present study, about 60.00% of the respondents belonged to the age group 30 to 60 years. Among the respondents, about 24.36% were in the age class 20-29 years and 8.73% in below 19 years. only 6.91 years belonged to the age group of above 60 years.

Table 3
EDUCATIONAL STATUSES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Education level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Primary	129	46.91
High School	73	26.55
Higher Secondary	38	13.82
Degree	24	8.72
Illiterate	11	4.00
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

About 46.91% of the respondents had primary education, about 26.55% had high school education, about 13.82% possessed higher secondary level education and 8.72% had pursued degrees. Further, only about 4% remained illiterate.

Table 4
MARITAL STATUSES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	41	14.91
Married	234	85.09
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Out of 275 respondents, about 85.09% (234) were married and 14.91% (41) were unmarried.

Table 5
COMMUNITY WISE CLASSIFICATIONS OF RESPONDENTS

Community	No of Respondents	Percentage
BC	36	13.09
MBC	212	77.09
SC	27	9.82
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly explains that out of 275 samples respondents, 212 i.e., 77.09% belongs to the Most Backward Community and 36 i.e., 13.09% belongs to Backward Community. Further, only about 9.82% remained Scheduled caste.

Table 6
FAMILY TYPES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Family Type	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Nuclear Family	208	75.64
Joint Family	67	24.36
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

This table exhibits that, 75.64 percent of the respondents belonging to the nuclear family. This clearly indicates the declining trend of the Joint family system.

Table 7
HOUSING

Housing	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Own	258	93.82
Rental	17	6.181
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From the table, it is revealed that almost all the respondents have own houses.

Table.8
TYPE OF HOUSE OF THE RESPONDENTS

House type	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Terraced	194	70.55
Thatched	49	17.81
Tiled	32	11.64
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

In the study area, houses of the community were of three main types. The above table revealed that 70.55% of respondents are living in terraced houses, 17.81% were thatched houses and 11.64% of the respondents are in tiled houses.

TABLE 9
CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER

Source of drinking water	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	243	88.36
No	32	11.64
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 9 shows that out of 275 respondents, majority of 243(88.36 per cent) of the respondents are having drinking water and 32(11.64 per cent) of them don't have drinking water facility.

TABLE 10
CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY

Source of electricity	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	259	94.18
No	16	5.82
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

It is clearly evident from the Table 10 that, out of 275 respondents, majority of 259 (94.18 per cent) of them are having electricity and 16(5.82 per cent) of them don't have electricity facility.

TABLE 11
CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO TOILET FACILITIES AVAILABLE

Toilet facility	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	189	68.73
No	86	31.27
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 11 reveals that out of 275 respondents, majority of 189(68.73 per cent) of them have Toilet facility, and 86(31.27 per cent) of them don't have any toilet facility.

TABLE 12
ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Primary Health Care facility	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	174	63.27
No	101	36.73
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 12 reveals that out of 275 respondents, majority of 174(63.27 per cent) of them have Primary Health Care facility and 101(36.73 per cent) of them don't have Primary Health Care facility.

TABLE .13
ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL FACILITIES

Government Hospital facility	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	168	61.09
No	107	38.91
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 13 reveals that out of 275 respondents, majority of 168(61.09 per cent) of them have Government Hospital facility and 107(38.91 per cent) of them don't have Government Hospital facility.

TABLE 14
OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF WOMEN IN DRY FISH INDUSTRY

Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Drying	239	86.91
Cleaning	12	4.36
Salting	4	1.45
Sorting and Grading	20	7.27
Total	275	100

Source: Primary Data

The table shows that women workers are engaged with four different types of activities in drying fish. It has been observed that out of the total, 239 (86.91percent) of the respondents have engaged with drying, followed by 12 (4.36percent) of the respondents having cleaning. twenty (7.27percent) of the respondents have sorting and grading as background. Only 4 (1.45 percent) of the respondents doing salting respectively.

TABLE 15
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

Monthly Family Income (Rs.)	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than Rs.4,000	82	29.82
Rs.4,001 – Rs.8,000	136	49.45
Rs.8,001 and above	57	20.73
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 15 shows that out of 275 respondents a majority of 136 (49.45percent) earn a monthly family income of Rs.4,001 to Rs.8,000 followed by 82 (29.82percent) earn less than Rs.4000 and 57 (20.73percent) Rs.8001 and above.

TABLE 16
MONTHLY PERSONAL INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

Monthly Personal Income (Rs.)	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than Rs.3,000	79	28.73
Rs.3,001 – Rs.6,000	137	49.82
Rs.6,001 and above	59	21.45
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 16 shows that out of 275 respondents a majority of 137 (49.82 percent) earn a monthly income of Rs.3,001 to Rs.6,000 followed by 79 (28.73percent) earn less than Rs.3000. and 59 (21.45percent)Rs.6001 and above The mean monthly personal income worked out to be Rs. 5,038.64.

TABLE 17
MONTHLY FAMILY EXPENDITURE OF THE HOUSEHOLDS

Monthly Family Expenditure (in Rs.)	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than Rs.3,000	86	31.27
Rs.3,001 – Rs.6,000	117	42.55
Rs.6,001 – Rs.9,000	49	17.82
Above Rs. 9,001	23	8.36
Total	275	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From Table 17 it has been observed that out of 275 respondents, a maximum of 117 (42.55percent) with a family expenditure of Rs.3,001 – Rs.6 000. Followed by 86 (31.27percent) of them have a family expenditure of less than Rs.3000, 49 (17.82percent) of them have a family expenditure of Rs.6, 001 – Rs.9, 000 and 23 (8.36percent) have a monthly family expenditure of Rs. 9, 001 and above. The mean monthly family expenditure of the households works out to be Rs. 7,227.27.

Gini Ratio
Table – 18

Gini coefficient ratio G	Before vending dry fish	After vending dry fish
	0.16925	0.12803

The Gini ratio was estimated to analyse the distribution of household income of the respondents before and after selling dry fish in the study area. The estimated values of Gini ratio before and after selling dry fish clearly indicate that there is no perfect equality among the respondents household income. But decrease in the value of Gini ratio from 0.16925 to 0.12803 show that the income inequality between the respondents has decreased after vending dry fish.

Economic Empowerment

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between economic empowerment and their level of perception of dry fish vending.

Table – 19
Relationship between Economic Empowerment and level of perception

S.No	Economic Empowerment	Percentage of Respondents	
		Yes	No
1	Decreased susceptibility of the women crisis	71.1	28.9
2	Raised access & control resources at household	91.1	8.9
3	Greater access to financial resource outside household	86.7	13.3
4	Financial self-sufficiency of women	93.3	6.7
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data.

Economic empowerment is the initial aspect of women development. 86.7% respondents were of the view that the economic empowerment of dry fish vending has resulted in greater access to financial resources outside the household and increased access and 91.1% respondents were of the observation that control over resources at the household level. Further 71.1 per cent of them stated that economic empowerment has resulted in reduced vulnerability of the women crisis and 93.3% respondents were of the view that increased financial self reliance of women.

In order to find out whether there is any correlation in the awareness of economic empowerment and their level of perception of dry fish vending, chi-square test has been applied. The results of the Chi-square test are furnished below.

Calculated value of Chi-square	= 27.05
Table value at 5 per cent level	= 7.815
Degrees of freedom	= 3

As the calculated value of Chi-square is greater than the table value at 5 per cent level of significance, there is a relationship in the awareness of economic empowerment of dry fish vending and their level of perception of the respondents in the study area.

Table – 20
Significant differences in satisfaction of work among the respondents based on monthly family income

Monthly Family Income (Rs.)	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	Interpretation
Less than Rs.4,000	82	29.03	9.41	0.6827	Not Significant
Rs.4,001 – Rs.8,000	136	17.42	3.74		
Rs.8,001 and above	57	12.83	1.58		

Source: Computed from Primary Data

In order to find out the significant difference in satisfaction of work among the respondents based on monthly family income, the 't' value was calculated and the calculated 't' value was found to be 0.6827 which is lower than the table value 1.97 which is significant at 0.05 level. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and concluded that there is no significant difference in satisfaction of work among the respondents between monthly family income of the respondents.

CONCLUSION

The results obtained from this survey revealed that the living conditions of respondents remain poor and

almost unchanging in recent years. Off- season unemployment is more in the selected coastal villages of Tuticorin District. Concerted action by government agencies, local bodies, trade unions, and voluntary organization with the active support, co-operation and participation of the respondents is required for solving the issues and for the growth and development of the sector.

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