



## “SOCIO -ECONOMIC STUDY ON WOMEN FISH VENDORS IN COASTAL KERALA”

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### **Abstract**

*Fisheries are an important sector next to agriculture in India. Fishing sector plays an important role in the socio-economic development and also contributes to earn foreign exchange reserves of India. After meeting the domestic requirement this sector exports US 3.5% billion (2012-13) and provides employment opportunity over 14.5 million people on fisheries and fish production. As per FAO statistics India stands second to China. Regardless of the efforts of fisheries community they still continue living in poverty and face many socio economic problems. Considering the women fish vendors they constitute only a small portion of the community and are ignored by the government and the policy makers. The present study is an attempt to analyze the various socio economic issues faced by the women fish vendors of Kerala state. The researcher has taken a sample size of 70 respondents from the coastal areas of Kerala.*

**Keywords** *Women Fish Vendor, Socio Economic, Fishing Community, Poverty.*

### **Introduction**

The role of Indian women from ancient history itself proved that their positions were inferior to man. Their life is restricted into the four walls of the house as daughter, wife and as a mother. From the Vedic era onwards women have accompanied men as a silent partner in the social functions. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century this scenario changed many women participated in the National movements and were placed in the eminent positions in administration and other office bearers with that the education level has gone up and changed the views of the society. Modern women started giving emphasis on education, healthcare, social, economic and religious activities, and the participation in recreational activities. But the situation of Women fish vendors is different. Still, they are treated to be marginalized category. The researcher has observed that, most of the women fish vendors are the only earning member in the family and they face a lot of problems pertaining to social and financial aspects. Most of the women fish vendors are under the category of informal. As per ILO informal sectors are creating more employment and income generating activities. They are working under unregulated market. Even though the Government of Kerala has allotted a fair budget to improve the social and economical status of the sector but still they are in the marginalised sectors of the economy due to lack of education and exploitation by the middleman. At this juncture it is relevant to study the socio-economic problems faced by the women fish vendors in coastal Kerala.

### **Objectives**

The main objective of the study is to analyze the socio-economic conditions of the women fish vendors in Kerala.

1. To study the demographic variable of the respondent
2. To study the health and other amenities available to the respondent
3. To study the income, expenditure and savings of the respondents

### **Review of literature**

1. **Femeena Hassan and R Sathiadhas (2005)** the study reveals that Kerala fisherwoman folk were indebted in or other ways. Most of them are in the clutches of local money lenders than the bank credit. They also face the occupational health hazards like backache, headache and anaemic.
2. **K.M.Rajwan Kabir(et.al (2012)** A study conducted in old Brahmaputra river found that most of the fishermen constitute Muslim caste with primary education. It was found that they are facing a lot of socio-economic problems in health, poor sanitation and were treated as deprived status. They are also backed by marketing, no awareness of mechanised system of fishing and lack of credit faculties.



3. **Shuthawethi Peke (2013)** A study conducted among women fish vendors in metropolitan city of Mumbai found that the problems and challenges are almost common to the organized and unorganised sectors. Earlier the fish vending was mostly done by women vendors but this has been replaced by the men vendors and the era of malls. Lot of measures have been taken by the Govt to get rid of the problems of women vendors but the corruptions and the political involvement had destroyed the aids provided to them. The existing infrastructure facilities and the problems in the work places are also restrict them from doing the vending. Cooperative societies had been formed for these fisheries in the jetties but only less active work participation by the women also limited the scope of improvement.
4. **Thuita F.M1 Mwadime K.2 and Wang'ombe J.K (2013)**The study point out the increasing women employment through the access of Mf have a greater impact on food security and consumption, child welfare , health and hygiene and educational standards of families and societies. The consumption pattern of access to the micro finance is more significant than the no client and the dietary diversity, of the two groups are significantly different.

### Methodology

The method used for data collection was both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through a structured interview schedule and secondary data were collected from research articles, journals and websites.

**Population:**The population for the study consist of registered women fish vendors of coastal Kerala

**Sample:** A multistage sampling has been adopted because the respondents are spread over the entire State. A sample size Of 70 have been selected for the study.

### 4.3 Tools used

The tools used for the study is percentage and chi-square method with the help of SPSS .

### Findings

1. The Study concludes that 36.6% of the respondents are in the age group of 36-45 and 25.4% above 55 years and only 4.2% constitute 26-35 years. It also shows that 91.5% of the respondents are in the vending field for more than 8 years.
2. The study shows that 88.7% of the respondents are married and 8.5% are widows. 56.3% of the respondents are living in the joint family and 43.7% are from nuclear family.
3. The study reveals that 54.9% are of primary level education and 40.8% are illiterate.
4. A large number of respondents' family, 98.6% has 1-5 earning members and 64.8% constituted 1-5 dependents.
5. The study reveals 76% of the respondents have taken this vending for helping the family and 21.1% for a regular income.
6. A large number of respondent88.7% are living in own house and 8.5% in ancestral house and2.8% lives in the rented house.
7. The study shows that 93%of the respondent is working for 6 days in a week
8. The study reveals that 70.4% are vending in vending centres like the fish market and 28.2% door to door and. 52.2% of the respondent reported that they are facing mental harassment from the officials in the workplace.
9. The study reveals that 70% of the respondents are suffering from back pain, 16.9% have respiratory problems and 7% have the problem of headache.
10. The study reveals that 70.5% of the respondents depend on bore well, only 70.5% of the respondents have the facility of the latrine, 94% respondents have electricity, no respondents have either drainage or waste disposal systems, only 58.82% respondents use the mobile phones and 18% of the respondents own two-wheelers.

11. The study concludes that 98.6% of the respondents opened the bank account and only 1.4% can operate the bank account independently.
12. The study concludes that 73.2% of the vendors are earning a daily income of Rs. 250-500 and 16.9% above Rs.1500.
13. It shows 81.7% of the respondents have a monthly expenditure of Rs.4500 above.
14. The study concludes 76.1% of the respondents have no savings and out of 23.9% of the respondents' savings, 12.7% in LIC, 7.1% in Chitty and 4.2% in post office savings.

### Discussions and Conclusion

The study reveals that majority of the respondents are facing socio-economic problems in the community. The respondents are of the opinion that they are compelled to work for all days in a week to run the family due to the irresponsibility of the male members. Most of their earnings are spent on liquors and other entertainments only 20% spend on family. Most of the members are living in the joint family with a family size of 6-11 members and the responsibility lies on the elderly lady of the family. The women fish vendors have to reach the landing centres early in the morning for the auction sale. The basic amenities such as toilet or drinking water are not available in the landing centres. Most of the households are spending Rs.25 per day for drinking water because the water available to them in the bore well is of salt content and there is no provision of the public tap. Another problem encountered by the respondent in door to door vending is that most of them sell the fish to their regular customers and the money will be paid on a later day that makes more indebted because they have to purchase the fish from the market, for that they will take loan from the money lenders for a daily interest basis and they charge high interest rate. Most of their income is eroded by way of paying interest. It is also found that majority of the respondent have no savings at all even after years of vending.

To conclude the study, the only assistance to the women fish vendors in Kerala is from the Matsyafed namely "Thanal" a maximum amount of Rs.5000. Respondents who are above 55 years are provided with a pension which they are already maintained in the respective fisheries societies as pension fund. The Government has to take initiative to improve their literacy level by opening more schools in the coastal area and include them in the financial inclusive programmes.

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