

Socio-economic Status of Fishermen Community of Danti village in Valsad District (Gujarat) India

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Abstract

In the present paper the socioeconomic status of fishermen community of Danti village in Valsad district of Gujarat was discussed and suggestions of community development were given. Using questionnaire supported with interviews, data were collected from 300 fishermen families during 2009. The age group of the fishermen varied between 18-72 years and the average age of fishermen was found to be 44 years. From the total studied population, it was observed that there were 78.0 % nuclear and 22.0 % joint families. Education level of fishermen was very poor in terms of higher education and specific training, 10.0 % fishermen were illiterate and 90.0 % had primary and HSC level education. The analysis revealed that 51.3 % of fishermen earned not more than lakh rupees per year. There were 49.3 % of fishermen having fisheries experience for 10-20 years. Mechanized boats and modern gears were used by 70.0 % fishermen in the studied area. Technical and financial support from Government was availed only by 4.3 % of fishermen. Marketing facilities were not upto the mark and was complained by 45.7 % fishermen community. Overall condition of fisherfolk from Danti village revealed to provide facilities and uplift the status by educating fishermen and implementing Government schemes.

Key words: Socioeconomic study, fishermen, Gujarat, Valsad and Danti village

Fisheries play an important role in the national economy and important source of foreign exchange, generating employment, rich protein food etc. Therefore, in India fishermen could be one of the most intensive users of coastal zone. Girippa (1994) evaluated the impact of fisheries sector on the development process of the country and the contribution of marine and inland fisheries sector in rural and economic development of the country. Master (1999) worked on socio-economic status of fishermen community of the Valsad district of Gujarat in India. Gill and Motahar (1982), Bhaumik and Saha (1994) and Rajan (2000) assessed the socio-economic condition of traditional fishermen community whereas Joshi (1996) studied how the fishermen community affected by mechanized craft. Ibrahim (1992) studied the socio-economic impact of the introduction of mechanized techniques from outside into a traditional and labor intensive sector, which employed indigenous and conservational technology. Bradecina (2008) discussed the socio-economic conditions of fishers as well as aspect of governance in the Atulayan Bay Marine Protected Area. Alam (2005) observed that fishermen were not capable to meet their basic needs to buy their main requisits.

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Methodology

For the present study 300 fishermen families were selected randomly to follow the method of Cochran (1977) and information was collected by personal interview with the help of prepared questionnaire during the year 2009. The strategy adopted for data collection was to first approach headmen of the villages through local contacts familiar with the villages and secure general information about the villager. The basic approach in this study was to adopt a combination of data collection and information pertaining the numerous spatially dispersed participants. These observations were based on regular visits and discussions. The multistage proportional sample method was adopted in this study. In first stage, details of fisherman villages and total number of people residing in these villages were collected. The collected information comprised personal information like age, education level, family structure, housing condition and economic status while, professional information followed experience in fishing occupation, use of fishing craft and gear, government support and marketing system. The collected data had analyzed to explain the socioeconomic condition of fishermen of Danti village in Valsad district of Gujarat state.

Gujarat is the western state of India, has long coast line 1600 kilometers, a wide continental shelf area of 1,84,000 km², vast stretches of estuarine and brackish water area and 2, 14,000 km² Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in Arabian Sea. The area available for fishing activities extends from North (Lakhpat) to South (Valsad) heaving 286 landing center and 851 marine villages inhabited by 4.93 lakh fishermen. There were 32,029 fishing boats in the state, out of which 21,145 were mechanized boats and 10884 were non-mechanized boats. Gujarat contributing 6.70 Lakh tones of marine fish production that is about 20 % of the marine fish production of country (Anon 2008).

Valsad is a southern district of Gujarat, constituting 63 km long coast line on that 69 landing center and 0.72 lakh fishermen. To know the present status of fishermen community Danti village of Valsad taluka (Fig. 1) was selected because it is situated in coastal area with majority of fishermen community and important area for fisheries production.

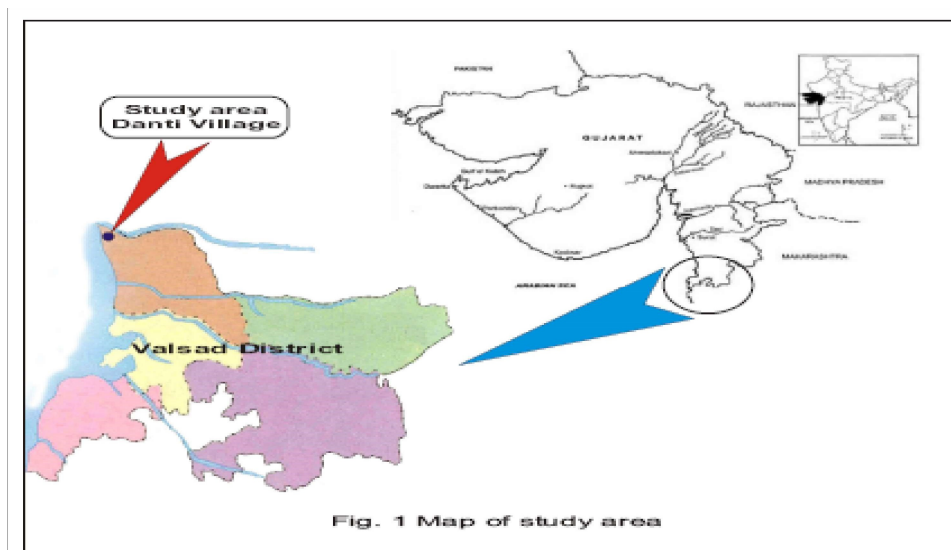


Figure 2. Personal information of fishermen community

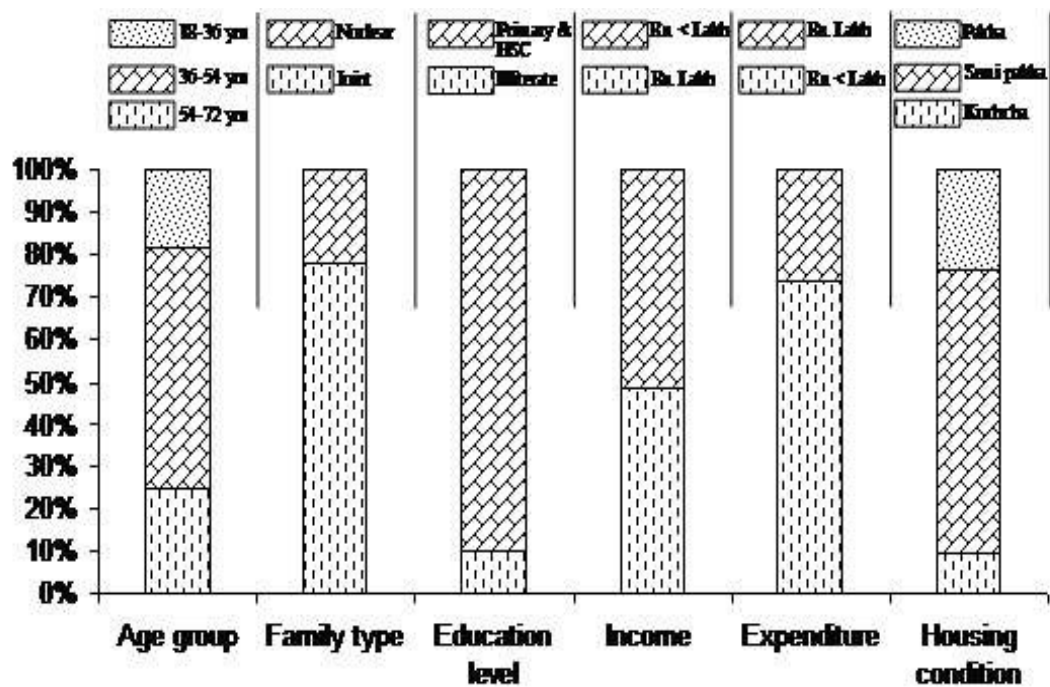
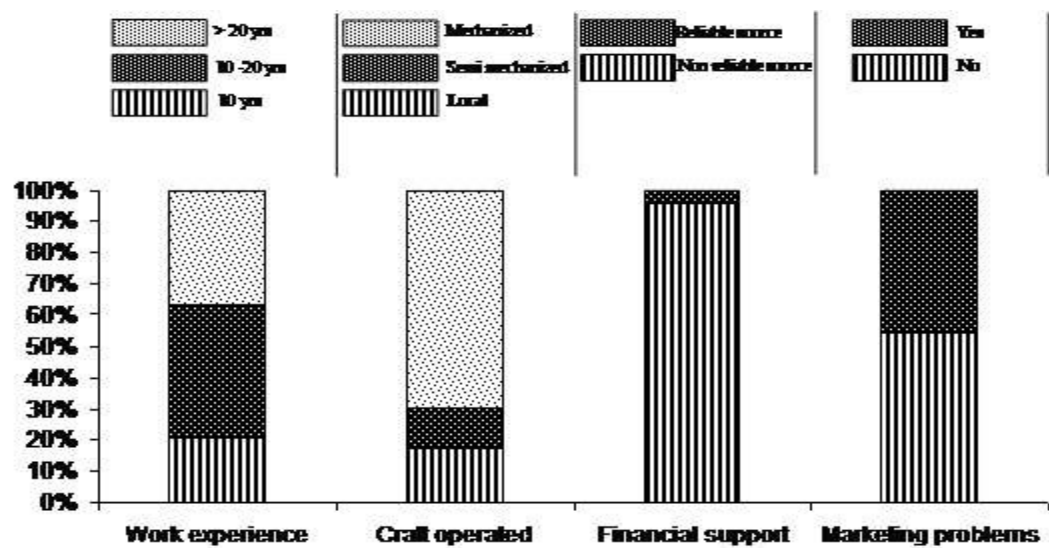


Figure 3. Professional information of fishermen community



Socio-economic Status

1. Age structure

The age structure of the study area divided in three groups and observed 24.7 % fishermen in 18-36 age group, 57.0 % fishermen in 37-54 age group and 18.3 % fishermen in 55-72 age groups. It was also observed that age group 34-54 actively engaged in fisheries profession compare to other age groups. It was not found that below 18 years fishermen involved in fisheries profession (Fig. 2). The average age of fishermen was 44 years with minimum and maximum 19 and 76 years respectively.

2. Education level

In studied area 90.0 % of fishermen had primary and HSC level while 10.0 % fishermen illiterate, while no one having higher education (Fig. 2). Data revealed that lack of higher education, deprivation from school in the early age and lack of specific training for fishing and related field is the problem of studied area.

3. Family structure

In this study family classified as nuclear and joint family and it is found that nuclear families having low income, less investment, poor housing condition compared to joint families. The family structures of studied area were observed that 78.0 % of fishermen belong to nuclear family and 22.0 % of fishermen belong to joint family (Fig. 2). These data revealed that majority of fishermen are belongs to nuclear family and average family members were found 5 (1-19) minimum and maximum respectively.

4. Income and expenditure

Income of fishermen from study area were analyses and observed that 48.7 % fishermen earning in rupees less then lakh rupees lakhs and 51.3 % fishermen earning in rupees lakhs per year (Fig. 2). The income of fishermen more than lakhs rupees was not observed. The expenditure in fishing activity of fishermen also studied and found that 74.0 % expends in rupees less then lakh while 26.0 % expends in rupees lakh per year (Fig.2).

5. Housing condition

In study area it was observed that majority of fishermen (66.7 %) had semi-pukka house, less fishermen (9.6 %) had kuchcha house and 23.7 % fishermen had pukka house (Fig.2). It is also observed that all the fishermen's house had basic facilities and joint families having well housing condition compares the nuclear families.

Professional Information

1. Involvement in fishery profession

The involvement of fishermen in fishing activity or work experience of fishermen were analyzed and found that majority of fishermen (42.4 %) involved from 10-20 years, less number of fishermen (20.6 %) involved less than 10 year and 37.0 % fishermen are involved more than 20 years in fisheries profession (Fig. 3).

2. Fishing craft and gears

It was observed that fishermen using mechanized boats and advanced gear for harvesting of fishes in the studied area. Figure 3 showed that 17.3 % of fishermen uses local boat, 13.0 % uses semi mechanized boat and 69.7 % uses mechanized boat for fishing activity. The local boat *balam* is used near the coastal line and the semi-mechanized boat as *Machhawa* used for catch the fish.

3. Government support

The source of financial support to fishermen studies and found that less number of fishermen (4.3 %) takes financial support from reliable finance source like bank loan, credit society while most of fishermen (95.7 %) were financed by non reliable source like merchant, relatives, friends (Fig. 3).

4. Marketing problem

The marketing problem of fishermen were analyzed and found that 54.3 % of fishermen had no complained for marketing while 45.67 % of fishermen complained for the marketing problem (Fig. 3). It was wide group of fishermen that having market problem. It is direct effect on income of fishermen. Introduction of better livelihood and implementation of technology is possible only after screening the socioeconomic and technical status of any group of people, fishermen community is not exception. Reports of Joadder (2008) on socioeconomic status; Ghosh and Barma (2010) on socioeconomic status, use of gear & craft and role of middlemen are available. On other hand, Juntarashote (1985) worked on economic condition of two fishermen communities. Kurian (1985) analyzed the livelihood standards including housing, health condition, literacy level and population growth of marine fishermen. Socioeconomic status of fishermen community of Danti village was not good. Education plays an important role in changing the status of community. It may change the mindset for acceptability the technology upgradation. Bradecina (2008) and he indicated that low education and in depicted social service affects the fishermen and fishery profession. Master (1999) describes that education level of fishermen was very low in Gujarat. In the present findings, though the education level of fishermen community was up to only higher secondary level. The use of improved technological gazettes e.g. mechanized boat and gears was at higher rate, it could be due to general development of area. Additionally majority of fishermen was involved in fishery profession. The findings were supported by the work of Phattareeya *et. al.*, (2004), who claimed that fishermen community preferred the fishery profession in studied area.

In fishing occupation major parts of income is invested towards the purchase, repairing and maintenance of fishing requisites. Fishermen from studied area were also reported to invest a large amount of income for same purpose. Such findings were also reported by Juntarashote (1985), Ghosh and Barma (2010) expressed that large amount of income was spent towards fishery profession whereas. Girippa (1993) and Joshi (1996) described the main expenditure towards the mechanized craft. Importance on marketing in fishery profession was stressed by Agrawal (1990) and Hossain (1994). The results of present work and report strengthen fact the awareness of programmes and improvement in marketing should be prioritized.

Suggestions

Based on the result of this study following recommendations are made to improve the livelihood of fishermen, increase the income and betterment in fisheries profession: 1. Need of implementation of effective literacy programmes and general awareness programmes from school, among the children of fishermen. Awareness programmes on saving, education, income generation activity and assets creation must be given to these people for improving their standard of living. Alternate employment opportunity and professional training should be given to fishermen; 2. The housing condition and basic facilities of fishermen should be studied in detail and necessary remedial measure should be adopted by the government; 3. In fishing village there is lack of suitable roads, transportation, communication facilities and isolated from main stream of society. So, providing these facilities to fishermen must be considered seriously; 4. Need to change the financing policies like easy accessible loan with low interest rate for the fishermen because middlemen and money lenders still exploit the fishermen; 5. To fetch good market price necessary policy measures must be taken for organizing fishermen in appropriate organization and well developed marketing system. 6. The safety of fishermen is necessary to work in undeveloped area and international border; Necessary steps must be taken by the fisheries department for the effective coordination and implementation of different fisheries programmes because this lacking in coordination among various agencies hinders the development in the fishing community; 8. A detailed study on all aspects of socio-economic condition of fishermen must be conducted at the local body and report should be submitted to the Government for the taking necessary and effective welfare measures.

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