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Gadde Sriharsha

M.Sc., Department of Extension and Communication Management, College of Community Science, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

Dr. Annapurna Kalal

Professor and Head, Department of Extension and Communication Management, College of Community Science, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

Dr. KV Basavakumar

Chief Scientific Officer (fisheries), Directorate of Research, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

Dr. Shobha Nagnur

Professor, Department of Extension and Communication Management, College of Community Science, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author

Gadde Sriharsha

M.Sc., Department of Extension and Communication Management, College of Community Science, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

Socio-economic profile and constraints faced by fisherwomen in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh

Gadde Sriharsha, Dr. Annapurna Kalal, Dr. KV Basavakumar and Dr. Shobha Nagnur

Abstract

In order to know the constraints faced by fisherwomen involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries a study was conducted in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh during 2020-21. The fisherwomen were selected through purposive random sampling method. A total of 120 respondents were selected. Primary data was collected through personal interview method. The data was analyzed by using suitable statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, correlation and t-test respectively. The results revealed that half (50.00%) of the women belonged to middle aged category. Cent per cent of the respondents belonged to other backward caste *i.e.*, Palli community. More than half (57.50%) of the respondents were illiterates and 89.17 per cent were married. Majority of fisherwomen belonged to (90.00%) nuclear families and family size was ranging from 1-4 members. The annual income was upto Rs. 1, 32,000 for 88.00 per cent of fisherwomen. Study revealed that cent per cent of the respondents expressed lack of transportation was the major problem. A great majority (98.33%) of the respondents said that high interest rate charged by money lender as a major constraint in scaling up the fisheries post-harvest activities. Three fourth of the fisherwomen said (75.83%) lack of storage and preservation facilities at community level, followed by (73.33%) health problems associated with work specially while doing post-harvest activities of marine fisheries. Long working hours, lack of proper hygienic conditions were also the major constraints for fisherwomen.

Keywords: Constraints, socio-economic profile, fisherwomen

Introduction

Women play an important role in development of fisheries sector along with their role in household management. Although active marine fishing is undertaken by men, after harvesting women play major role in post-harvest activities. It is reported that women perform 2/3rd of the world's work, receive only 10.00% of world's income and own only one percent of the total assets (Ashaletha *et al.* 2002) [2]. Although fish production is traditionally considered as masculine enterprise, women's role in fisheries is complementary and crucial (Akpaniteaku *et al.* 2005) [3]. Persistent poverty and weakening economic situations have enforced many women from poor rural families to work outside their homes who ventured into varied income generating activities. At the same time continuing to perform household duties. For the women along the marine coastal line on both sides of Indian peninsular, post-harvest activities are the main livelihood and source of income.

The role of the women in fishing largely relies on the socio-economic conditions of the households. Besides selling fish, the fisherwomen's role as a homemaker, is indispensable for the men to carry out other activities for livelihood support. Activities like cooking, childcare, children's education, family health and sanitation are exclusively looked after by fisherwomen. Post-harvest fisheries activities, especially those involving preservation of products over several days (like fish drying, salting) are also done by many fisherwomen. The direct involvement of women in fisheries sector cleaning, fish trading, making value - added products, fish curing, etc. Women play indirect role in decision making, financial management, family can be seen mere in care (Ashaletha *et al.* 2002) [2]. Yet, despite technological advances in fisheries, many of the traditional ideologies with respect to gender roles in fisheries have remained relatively un-changed, and governance has failed to recognize the unequal division of labor, policy development. Consequently, women are excluded from the fisheries organizations, ignored by creditors and receive little training to improve fishing techniques, opportunities and conditions. Even though they play major role in post-harvest activities in fisheries sector, yet their roles remain unarticulated and unrecognized (Dehadrai

et al. 2002)^[6]. The socio-economic status of fisherwomen is not seen to be on par with other sectors. Hence an attempt has been made in this study to understand the socio-personal profile and to discuss the constraints faced by women in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted to know the constraints faced by fisherwomen in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh during 2020-21. The state was purposively selected because it is one of the major fish producing state in eastern part of India. More specifically Guntur district situated along the coast of Bay of Bengal and marine fishery is one of the most important subsistence and economic activity in this district. Fisherwomen were selected through purposive random sampling method. Sixty fisherwomen each from, Nizampatnam taluk and Repalle taluk were selected randomly for the study. From each taluk 60 respondents were selected with 15 each fisherwomen from four villages Thus, a total of 120 women involved in post-harvest activities of fisheries have been selected. Primary data was collected through personal interview method by using interview schedule. The data was analyzed by using suitable statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, correlation and t-test.

Results and Discussion

Age

The results presented in Table 1 indicates that, half (50.00%)

of the women belonged to middle aged category, whereas 40.83 per cent of the respondents belonged to young age. very few of them (09.17%) belonged to old age category. Most of them were in middle and young age category because in villages at an early age women get married and by the age of 30 years their children are grown up and the women will be free of household responsibilities. These women can take up income generating activities. Some of the women will start working after getting married. Some of the post-harvest activities are usually done at home like drying, salting etc. by old women as it entails comparatively less physical strain. Hence majority belonged to middle and young age categories. The above-mentioned results were in consonance with the results of Bhuiyan *et al.* (2018)^[4] who found that most of the fisherwomen belonged to middle aged category.

Caste

Caste wise categorization (Table 1) revealed that, cent per cent of the respondents belonged to other backward caste *i.e.*, Palli community as fishing is the major family occupation of the Palli community in Andhra Pradesh from the ancient times. Most of the villages are located based on the caste as same caste people lives in one village. Hence all the respondent's in the study belonged to the same community. Similar results were shown by Singh *et al.* (2014)^[11] wherein, majority of the fisherwomen belonged to other backward castes.

Table 1: Socio-personal characteristics of women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries n=120

S. No	Categories	f	(%)
1	Age		
	Young (18-35)	49	40.83
	Middle (36-55)	60	50.00
	Old (>56)	11	09.17
2	Caste		
	Other backward caste		
	Vadla balija	-	-
	Palli	120	100.00
	Yadava	-	-
	Goud	-	-
3	Education		
	Illiterate	69	57.50
	Primary (1 st -4 th)	11	09.17
	Middle school (5 th -7 th)	12	10.00
	High school (8 th -10 th)	23	19.17
	PUC (11 th -12 th)	04	03.33
	Degree (>12 th)	01	00.83
4	Marital status		
	Married	107	89.17
	Unmarried	00	00.00
	Widowed	08	06.67
	Divorced	05	04.17
5	Family type		
	Nuclear	108	90.00
	Joint	12	10.00
6	Family size		
	Small family (1-4members)	104	86.67
	Medium family (5-8 members)	16	13.33
	Large family (9 and above)	00	00.00
7	Annual income		
	Low (Upto Rs. 1,32,000)	100	83.33
	Medium (Rs.1,32,000 to Rs. 5,72,000)	20	16.67
	High (> Rs. 5,72,000)	00	00.00
8	Family occupation		
	Fisheries + wage earners	50	41.67

	Fisheries business	64	53.33
	Fisheries + business	04	03.33
	Fisheries + services	02	01.67

Education

More than half (57.50%) of the respondents were illiterates. Around one fifth (19.17%) of fisherwomen had high school education. Few (10.00%) had middle school education, followed by primary (09.17%), PUC (03.00%) and only 00.83 per cent of them had formal education Upto degree programme. It is clear from the above details that the majority of women doing post-harvest activities of marine fisheries were illiterates or with low levels of education. The reasons could be that most of the women are from low socio-economic status, Girl child from low socio-economic families will get married at an early age. Gender bias in the family also might have come in the way of girl's education. Parents involve their daughters in household work and to take care of their siblings. Other factors may be lack of awareness about education, lack of desire and family support. All these factors might have resulted in majority of the women as illiterates.

The findings of the study were again in line with Bhuiyan (2018) ^[4].

Marital status

Table 2 concluded that, majority (89.17%) of women were married. About seven percent (06.67%) were widows followed by divorcees (04.17%). It is also observed that there were no unmarried women. In the present study most of the women belonged to middle and young age categories. Generally, women in rural areas will get married at an early age *i.e.*, usually at 18 years or even before (child marriages) which might have resulted all the respondents in married category.

The results are in the line with the findings of Kalita *et al.* (2015) ^[7] wherein their study results revealed that majority of the women were married.

Table 2: Constraints faced by women participating in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries n=120

Sl. No	Constraints	f (%)
1	Lack of transportation facilities	120 (100.00)
2	High interest rate charged by money lenders	118 (98.33)
3	Lack of storage and preservation facilities at community level	91 (75.83)
4	Health problems associated with work	88 (73.33)
5	Long working hours	80 (66.67)
6	Inadequate infrastructure facilities	77 (64.17)
7	No proper allotment of space for fish retailers in the market place	71 (59.17)
8	Lack of proper hygienic condition in the fish market	71 (59.17)
9	Lack of information about policies and programmes	55 (45.83)
10	Non availability of sufficient quantity of fish for processing	46 (38.33)
11	Lack of sufficient loans from the co-operative societies	43 (35.83)
12	Limited access modern technologies	35 (29.17)
13	Lack of training on marketing	25 (20.83)

Note: *Multiple responses are possible

Type of family

Great majority of fisherwomen belonged to (90.00%) nuclear families and remaining (10.00%) belonged to joint families. During ancient time, people used to prefer to live in joint families. However, times are changing and families want to be self-sufficient. The joint family/extended family is disappearing even in villages and nuclear family structures are becoming more common as everybody wish to flourish their own/desired profession. Which can be attained in nuclear families without any obstacles. Similar findings were noticed by Kumaran *et al.* (2021) ^[9].

Family size

The size of family (Table 2) of respondents ranged from one to nine. Whereas majority (86.67%) of the respondents had family size ranging from 1-4 family members. A few (13.33%) belonged to medium family size (5-9 members). Now a days, most of the families are preferring one or two children unlike earlier time. Which might have resulted in small family size. As majority were belonged to nuclear family. The results of the study are similar with the results of Kumaran *et al.* (2021) ^[9].

Annual Income

The result in the Table 1 indicated that, 88.33 per cent of the women belonged to low-income category (Upto Rs. 1, 32,000) and very few (16.67%) belonged to medium income category (Rs. 1, 32,000 - Rs. 5, 72,000). None of them had high income. Hence it is clear that, majority if women doing post-harvest activities of marine fisheries belonged to low-income category. Women involving in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries are also working as wage labourers in small processing units. They earn 150-200/- per day. In addition, other family members are getting income from packaging of fish and men were involved in active marine fishing. Some of the women working as agriculture labourers. All these activities fetch less labourer's wage. Very few respondents are doing other income generating activities like grocery shops, poultry and animal husbandry activities etc., therefore, majority belonged to low income category.

Similar findings were seen in the studies by Sah *et al.* (2018) ^[10] who have concluded that the majority of the fisherwomen belonged to low-income category.

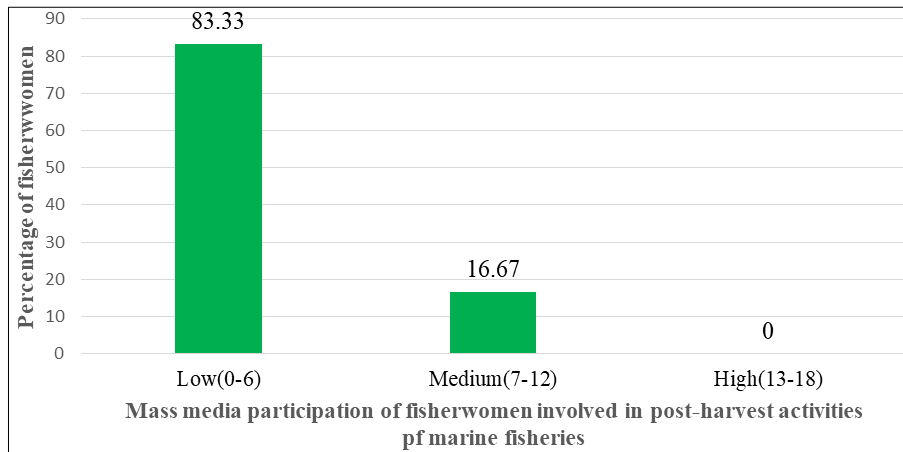


Fig 1: Categorization of women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries based on their mass media participation

Mass Media participation

Fig. 1 indicates overall mass media participation of women. It shows that majority (83.33%) of women belonged to low mass media participation category and remaining (16.67%) belonged to medium category of mass media participation. Most of them had basic mobile for their day-to-day

communication, some of them had smart phones. Very few of the respondents use social media like WhatsApp to communicate with their relatives through video calls etc. Because majority of respondents were illiterate. They rarely used print media such as newspapers and magazines.

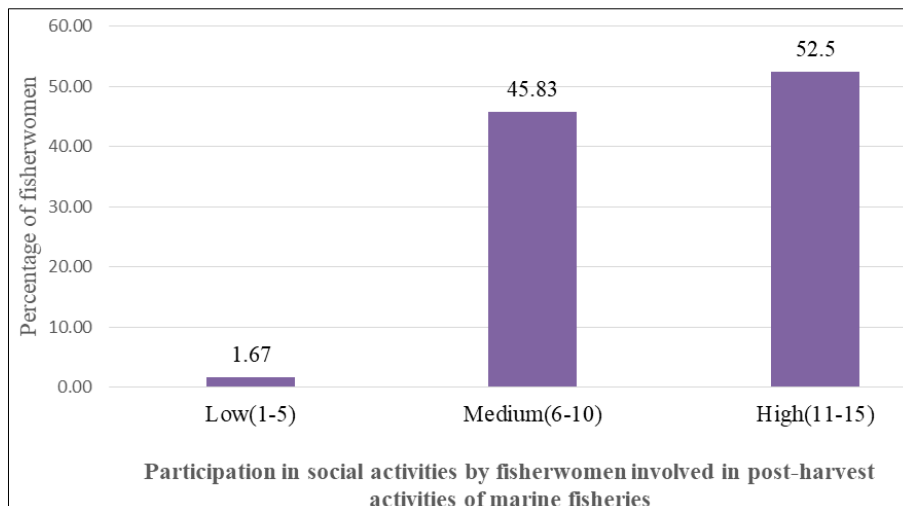


Fig 2: Categorization of women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries based on social participation

Social participation

Fig. 2 show the overall social participation of women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries. A little more than half (52.50%) of them belonged to high level category of social participation and less than half (45.83%) belonged to medium level of social participation category. Very few (01.67%) belonged to low level of social participation category. Most of the women belonged to high social participation. Social functions are a part of Indian culture where, women involvement is compared to men is more. Women participate in functions within or outside of their family. Most of the women said that they participate in festivals in their villages, special occasions like naming ceremonies, marriages, baby showers and flag festivals, banyan tree Pooja festivals, etc. These are the only source of recreation and social bonding wherein, they cannot be absent or avoid these functions.

Hence most of the respondents belonged to high social participation category. The results were in line with the findings of Siddeswari *et al.* (2020).

Constraints faced by women during post-harvest activities of marine fisheries

Table 2 shows the constraints/problems faced by women in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries. It is clear that cent per cent of the respondents expressed lack of transportation was the major problem. For marketing women have to travel 20 to 30 km. Sometime bus drivers do not allow them to get in due to fish smell and the private vehicles are too costly. A great majority (98.33%) of the respondents said that high interest rate charged by money lenders as women need money to invest during marketing of fish. Women need to invest money to purchase fish and marketing of fish. Women fish vendors operate mostly on small scale. They buy fish in baskets and take them to interior places to sell. Most often they borrow money from money lenders with high interest to invest in their business.

Majority said (75.83%) that lack of storage and preservation facilities at community level, followed by (73.33%) health problems associated while doing post-harvest activities of marine fisheries. Fish is highly perishable item. During rainy season due to lack of storage, the dried fish get wet and the

wet fish is not suitable for human consumption, Health problems associated with work was the constraint as expressed by women. They suffer with head ache, body pains, back pain, leg pain etc., Drying, grading, cleaning, cutting etc., are different activities in which women are either in squatting or bending postures. Over a period of time this may cause serious health problems like joint pain, back pain and body ache. For selling fish women go door to door with head loads. This causes head ache, leg pains. Most of the women expressed long working hours as constraint as they work for more than seven hours per day. After returning home in the evening, they find it difficult to do household work. Inadequate infrastructure facilities as a constraint expressed by 64.17 per cent of respondents. They lack community storage structures, current, water etc., A little less than two third of women expressed no proper allotment of space for fish retailers in the market place and most of them said lack of proper hygienic conditions in the market as constraints. Appropriate location to sell the fish at market is not allotted. This also affects marketing of fish. In conclusion increase in competition, decaying nature of fish and complex working conditions make their work more challenging. Their mobility is limited. Less possession of assets makes it difficult to get loans from banks/financial institutions. Less than half 45.83 per cent of the respondents expressed that lack of information about policies and programme, non-availability of sufficient quantity of fish for processing and lack of sufficient loans from the co-operative societies were the constraints for 38.33 per cent and 35.83 percentage of respondents respectively. Less than one third women (29.17%) said that limited access to modern technologies and lack of training on marketing (20.83%) were the constraints for women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries. Women need training on marketing activities regarding market prices to improve their socio-economic status. The results are in line with findings of Kangana *et al.* (2015).

Conclusion

Study concluded that half of the women belonged to middle aged category, cent per cent of the respondents belonged to Palli community. Most of the respondents were illiterates and married. Great majority of fisherwomen belonged to nuclear families and family size was ranging from 1-4 members. Majority belonged to low-income category. Cent per cent of the respondents expressed lack of transportation was the major problem. A great majority said that high interest rate charged by money lenders as women need money to invest during marketing of fish. Majority said lack of storage and preservation facilities at community level, health problems associated with work while doing post-harvest activities of marine fisheries, long working hours, no proper allotment of space for fish retailers in the market place. Even if allotted it is of very poor hygienic conditions which effects the marketing of fish for better price.

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