

Comparison of Socio-Economic Status of Fishers in Karainagar, Point Pedro and Mathagal Village, Jaffna

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Abstract: The study focused on the comparison of socio-economic status of fishermen living in Karainagar, Point Pedro and Mathagal village, Jaffna for a period of six months from September 2015 to February 2016. Data were collected from randomly selected 100 fishermen through structured questionnaire, interview and observation. Descriptive analysis of the direct social demography was done by using excel. The outcome of the study revealed that all fishermen were Catholics and Sri Lankan Tamils. Fishermen venture into sea, is aging between 44 -56 years and with primary education (70 %). The sex demography of communities explicit that in Point Pedro and Mathagal, men were higher in percentage (53.47%, 54.81%), while in Karainagar, women were higher in percentage (53.33%). Most of the houses in Karainagar and Point Pedro were good in condition. In general smoking, betel chewing and use of liquor were the common habits among all the adult fishermen. Active fishermen at Point Pedro and Mathagal were 90%, but 86% in Karainagar; having a mean income of LKR respectively Rs.35 000, Rs.51 250 and Rs.43 476. Income levels depended on the type of fishing method and effort.

Keywords: Questionnaire, Socio-economic, Fishing effort, Income Level

1. Introduction

Jaffna District is one of the 25 districts of Sri Lanka. It is located in the far north of Sri Lanka in the Northern Province and occupies most of the Peninsula. Jaffna district is surrounded by rich fishing areas. It inhabits a variety of species of finfish, shellfish and holothurians. Jaffna Peninsula is famous for its coastal fisheries. Two types of fishing methods identified in Jaffna are traditional and modern. The traditional methods are highly abundant in Jaffna area.

Fishery resources are one of the major livelihoods in Northern Province. Fish is one of the main sources of providing nutrition to the mankind. Its contribution is vital as food, source of employment and crucial to the economy of Sri Lanka. Fisheries sector plays an indispensable role in the economy of Sri Lanka contributing about 1.2 % to the GDP (Anonymous, 2013).

Karainagar, Point Pedro and Mathagal are situated in the Jaffna Peninsula, Northern Province. Fisheries and agriculture are the major economic activities in these places. The settlements of most of the fisher folk are near to the coast. Fishery is the major occupation for the village people.

2. Literature Survey

The data were collected from 110 respondents by using random sampling method. It was found that most of the inland fish farmers belong to the scheduled caste and majority of the fish farmers had their own land and practiced fish farming as the primary occupation for many decades. Their income from fish farming was too low (between Rs. 20,000 and 30,000/- p.a.). Most of them took financial help from their friends and relatives for their day to day investment. They spent their major earnings for basic needs, food and their children's education. Poverty, lack of

marketing facilities and lack of technical training are the major hurdles they face (Tapashi and Methra, 2014).

Fishery related activities carried out in the Teknaf region include fish marketing and trading, gear and craft maintenance and repair. There are very limited options for non-fishery related activities such as wage labour in the other sectors like agriculture, construction, livestock and poultry rising (Subrata Kumar Ghosh *et al.*, 2015).

The present study has also revealed that 70% of fishermen are engaged in fishing as their main occupation, 10% was in agriculture and 20% in daily labour as in other business. Main occupation of the people among 50 fishermen was fishing (86%), while 14% were secondary occupation. This result supports our findings to an acceptable level (Mahmud *et al.*, 2015).

Socio economic constraints such as household family pressure, low income, illiteracy, low economic status and lack of alternative employment opportunities are the main problems for marine fisheries development. The offered credit facilities from different GOs, NGOs are insufficient to meet their needs (Subrata Kumar Ghosh *et al.*, 2015).

The status of the fishermen were below the poverty line and were struggling to survive, with inadequate health, nutrition, sanitation, water supply, soil fertility, cooking fuel, animal feed and house building materials as their day-to-day problems (Rahman, 1994).

3. Objectives

Current study is focused on comparison of socio-economic status of fishers in Karainagar, Point Pedro and Mathagal village, Jaffna.

4. Methodology

Study Area

Three FI divisions (Figure 1); Karainagar, Mathagal and Point Pedro, among fourteen FI divisions of Jaffna district, were selected for the study.



Figure 1: Map of Study area
(Source: Google earth, 2006)

Primary data and secondary data were collected. Primary data was collected, using a pre-tested questionnaire, developed to collect the objectives of the study; included socio-economic conditions, age distribution, family size, literacy rate, occupation, housing condition and other economic activities. A total of 100 fishermen were interviewed.

In addition, face to face interviews and direct observations of the housing conditions were performed systematically.

Data analysis

All the collected data were entered and analyzed using Microsoft excel package and then presented in textual, tubular and graphical forms.

5. Results and Discussion

A detailed analysis was made on the following parameters.

Religion and Age of the chief occupant

All the resident peoples of the villages are Sri Lankan Tamils and Catholics.

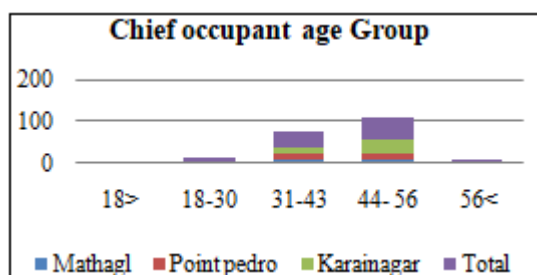


Figure 2: Distribution of different age groups of chief occupants

The collected data were categorized into the following five class intervals. Those are i) less than 18 years, ii) 18-30 years, iii) 31-43 years, iv) 44-56 years, and v) greater than 56 years (Figure 2). Based on this classification, there is no one under the first interval. All the occupants are greater than

18 years old. At present, according to the law of Sri Lanka, engaging child workers is a legally punishable offence. There are several NGOs involved in the preventing children violation. And now all the people understand the importance of the education to children. At present there is no one under less than 18 years, the largest age group recorded was 44-56 years, which contributes 53% and followed by 31 to 43 years, being 36%.

The lowest percentage falls in the group greater than 56 years, which was 5%. Under the young people's age group of 18-30 years there are a lesser number of people doing fishing activities, representing only 6%. As a consequence of the civil war prevailed before 2009, some of the native dwellers of the war affected area migrated to foreign countries seeking for employment opportunities. Some people further more prefer to do other work than fishing. Currently the fisherman family has become educated.

Sex ratio

Table 1: Sex ratio in selected site

Place	No of Male	No of Female	Total	Percentage of male	Percentage of Female
Karainagar	105	120	225	46.67	53.33
Point Pedro	77	67	144	53.47	46.53
Mathagal	57	47	104	54.81	45.19

The female percentage is higher than the male in Karainagar (Table 1). In Point Pedro and Mathagal the male percentage is higher than the female (Table 1). In Karainagar area women participation is high in the fishery; they are engaged in sorting, grading, repairing the net and in the dry fish production as well. But in Point Pedro region women contribution is very low. Men mostly don't allow the female to involve in fishing related activities due to cultural and religious barriers.

Literacy rate

Educational levels of the fishermen were categorized into three groups, which were primary, secondary and tertiary educational level. Generally educational levels of the fishermen are lower than average literacy rate of the country (Bryan, 2007). In three selected sites, majority of fishermen were with only the primary education (70%). People with tertiary education were marginal in the village. The Point Pedro fishermen were higher in literacy rate than those in other areas.

Housing condition

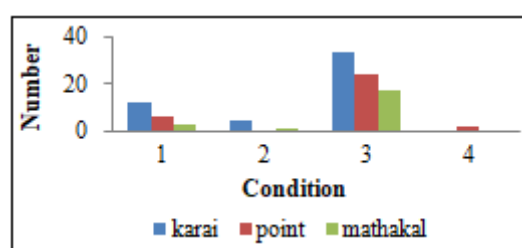


Figure 3: The housing condition of the selected area

The people with temporary house were categorized under poor condition (1). Permanent houses within roof or the floor made by clay, categorized as normal condition (2).

Permanent houses with tiles roof, cement floor categorized as good condition (3). Permanent house with tiles floor and painted that one is categorized as the excellent condition (4) (Figure 3). In the present study, most of the houses in Karainagar are found to be in good condition. Some luxury houses are present in the Point Pedro area.

In Karainagar area all houses have their own well individually. So they are using the well water for their household activities. The water supply methods in Point Pedro were common wells, separate wells and tube wells. The usage percentages were 21%, 46% and 33% respectively. In Mathagal area, most of the people used common wells (76%). Few families have the separate wells (10%) only 14% people used tube wells.

Work experience in fishing

The average work experience of the fishermen from Karainagar, Point Pedro, and Mathagal were respectively. 20 years, 23 years, 28 years. As a whole fishermen belonging to all three areas share the same experiences.

Boat type

Jaffna fishermen are mostly engaged in small scale fishing activities. In Karainagar area most of the fishermen have fibreglass boats while small numbers of people still do fishing in the traditional method especially by using Kaddumaram. Some fisherman in Point Pedro has multiday boats and others have fibreglass boats. In Mathagal all the fishermen are fishing with fibre glass boats.

Sales method and sale type

In Karainagar area, fishermen sell their fish products to the consumer by auction method. But in other two areas fishes are sold by weight in Kg base. And some of the fishermen are involved in dry fish production.

Liquor and narcotic consumption

In general smoking, betel chewing and use of liquor were the common habits among all the adult fishermen.

Occupation

Main occupation of fisher families was fishing. Majority of the fishermen were involved in fishing throughout the year. In Point Pedro and Mathagal 90%, Karainagar 86% of fishermen involved in fishing as the main occupation. While others were employed as meson, labourer and doing the poultry farm as their part-time of job.

Income level of the fishing community

Monthly income of fishermen in the Karainagar area ranged from Rs.15 000 to Rs.45 000. Average income obtained was Rs. 35 000. The study shows that majority of fishermen families come under income group of Rs. 25, 000 to Rs. 35, 000 per month (50 %) (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Monthly income of Karainagar fishermen

In Point Pedro area fishermen's monthly maximum, minimum, average incomes were respectively Rs. 80,000, Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 51,250. 56 % fishermen obtained an income in the range level of Rs 30,000 – Rs 50,000 (Figure 5).

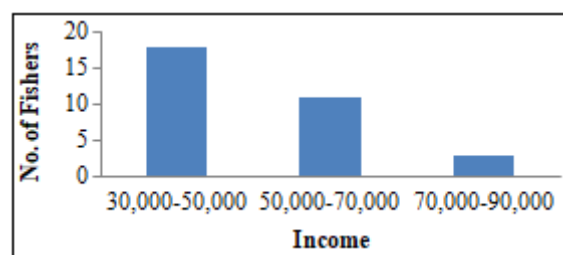


Figure 5: Monthly income of Point Pedro fishermen

In Mathagal area fishermen's monthly maximum, minimum, average incomes were respectively Rs. 80,000, Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 43, 476. Majority of fishermen families 76 % come under income group of Rs. 30, 000 to Rs. 50, 000 per month (Figure 6).

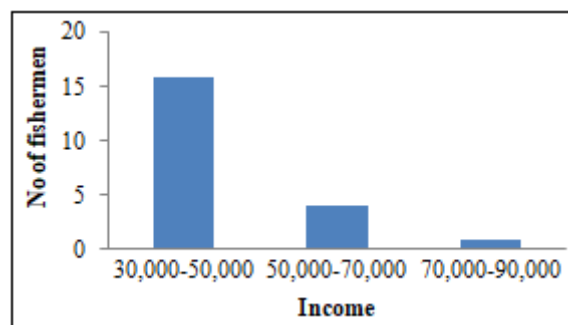


Figure 6: Monthly income of Mathagal fishermen

The income levels of the fisher folk depended on the method they used for fishing. Fishing effort and the harvest indirectly affected the income of the fishermen.

6. Conclusion

An array of findings are highlighted in the present study; socio-economic conditions of the fishermen in Jaffna region are moderate (neither poor nor rich). Majority of the fishermen come under 44-56 of age group. Their education was up to primary educational level. When compared the three sites, the mean highest income was obtained in the Point Pedro sites; because they mostly used the multiday boats for fishing, while Karainagar area obtained the average lowest income than the other two areas. In Karainagar and

Point Pedro regions houses were in good condition than the Mathagal area. Meanwhile some luxury houses were found in Point Pedro.

7. Future scope

Based on the socio-economic studies conducted in the field the following suggestions are made. More attention should be paid to enhance the literacy level of coastal population since the literacy rate, in general, is low.

NGO and Government can give some loan to the fishermen to improve their infrastructure facility as well as the fishing technology.

Improvement in road transport system in coastal regions will provide better price for catch of the fisher folk.

Since motorisation of country crafts has increased employment opportunities in certain regions. It should be encouraged in other coastal regions also.

Government should involve to improve the economic level of the traditional fishery.

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