



Socio-economic Status of Fishers along the Coast of Ratnagiri

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out to study the socio-economic status of fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. Three talukas were selected from the district and one hundred fifty two fishers were selected randomly. Information was collected through personal interview with the help of a well-structured interview schedule. The study revealed that majority (29%) fishers were from the age group 50-58 yr. All the participants were male. It was found that 97% were married and 54% were living in joint family. Fishers inherited their house from ancestors (78%). Majority of fishers had bank account (91%) and 11% were indebted.

KeyWords: Age, Department, Fishers, Fisheries, Ratnagiri, Socio-economic, Status.

INTRODUCTION

The second-oldest economic activity in the history of humanity after agriculture is fishing. Over one billion people rely on fishing as a significant part of their diet and as a source of income globally (Kumbhar, 2017). Fisheries sectors play an important role on socio-economic development of fishermen community (Banasure et al, 2023). Besides, fisheries also serve as the valuable and cheap source of protein to the country (Prabhavathi and Krishna, 2017) and important source of foreign exchange.

Maharashtra state has 720 km coastline which includes seven coastal districts: Palghar (74 km), Thane (112 km), Greater Mumbai (114 km), Raigad (132 Km), Ratnagiri (167 Km) and Sindhudurg (121 Km) (Anonymous, 2020). The overall fisher population in Maharashtra is 15, 18,228, including both inland and marine fishers. Among these, there were 1, 97,760 male fishers and 1, 88,499 female fishers are engaged (Anonymous, 2022). In Ratnagiri district, there are forty-six landing centers and ninety-eight fishing villages, serving as integral hubs for the fishing community. There are 71,620 fisher-folks, population in the district of which 35,957 individuals are male and 35,663 are female. There are 15,716 marine fishing boats in operation, of

which 13,002 are mechanized (Patilkhede et al, 2017).

The term socio-economic status (SES) refers to a measurement of a person's or a family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on a variety of factors including income, education, occupation, family affluence, physical assets, social position, social participation, caste, physical strength, political influence, etc. (Reza *et al*, 2015). Considering the large number of fisher families involved in fishing along the coast of Ratnagiri, this study was undertaken to understand the social and economic aspects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was descriptive as well as exploratory in nature. The data were analysed through descriptive statistics. The study was carried out in three taluka of Ratnagiri namely Dapoli, Ratnagiri and Rajapur. The survey was conducted on socio-economic condition of fishers. A total of 152 fishers were interviewed from three taluka of Ratnagiri. Pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect the required information.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. First section included the socio- personal details such as age distribution, fishing experience, religion and category of the fishers, and the second

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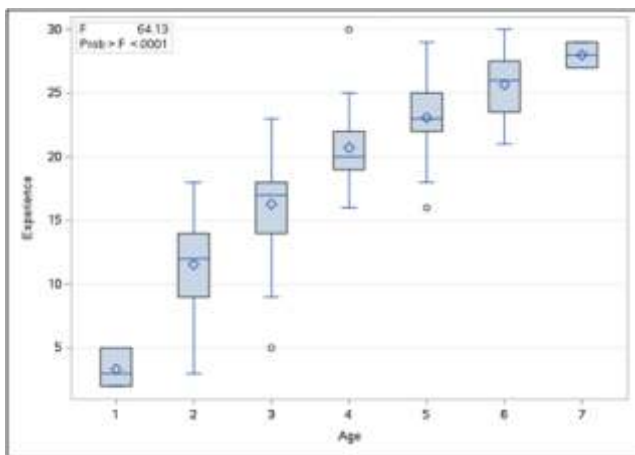


Fig. 2: Distribution of fishers according to fishing experience

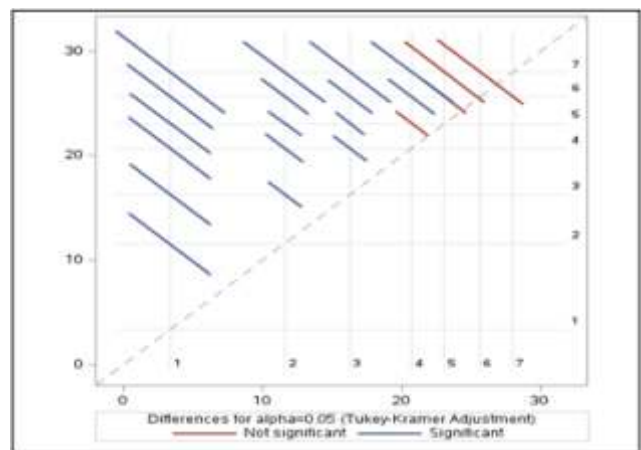


Fig 3: Comparison of experience with age groups

section included economic aspect as bank details, indebtedness and asset holdings. The questionnaire which consisted both open ended and close ended questions. The data were collected during March, 2023 to June, 2023.

The interviews were the primary sources of acquired data. Interviews were conducted at the landing centres and home in the selected area. The data were analysed mainly based on descriptive statistical analysis using MS excel and SAS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-personal analysis

The socio-personal status of fishers is being presented in Table 1.

Age and fishing experience

The age and fishing experience of an individual tells a lot about their social wellbeing. In the study area majority of fishers were in the age group of 50-58 yr (29%), followed by 34-42 year age group (26%), 26-34 year age group (17%), 42-50 yr age group (16%), 58-66 yr age group (8%), 18-26 age group (2%) and lastly 2% had age between 66-74 yr. Similarly, Banasure *et al* (2023) identified age of trap fisher in Ratnagiri. The highest percentage of trap fisher (50%) were belonged to the 36-50 middle age group, followed by 29.61% fisher were from old age group, while 20.83% fishers from young age group upto 30 yr of age. Gautam *et al* (2020) observed that a significant portion of the respondents, specifically 55.3%, fell within the middle age category of 31 to

45 yr. Patilkhede *et al* (2017) observed the average age of 0-5, 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35, 35-40, 40-45, 45-50. Implementing more equitable fishing policies Regulating the fishing practice Encouraging the collaboration Increasing level of enforcement Increase the presence of police in 12 nauticle mile area Fishers themselves form a vigilare group Increase in satellite/drone monitoring Number of respondents Responses based on location Dapoli Ratnagiri Rajapur fishermen in Ratnagiri was 45 yr and 32.92% fishermen belonged to young age of up to 33 yr, middle age comprised of 52.50% fishers the criteria of middle age ranging from 34-57 yr. The old age was categorised into '58 and above' in which 14.58% were recorded, out of total 240 samples.

The fishing experience was recorded as the majority of fishers (47%), had over 20 yr of fishing experience, followed by 15-20 yr (29%), 0-5 yr (3%), 5-10 yr (6%) and 10-15 yr (15%). Patilkhede *et al* (2017) studied that the average experience of fishers in fishing was 16 yr. There were 1.25% fishers present in this bracket of age group, 21.67% had fishing experience between 6-10 yr, 38.75% had high fishing experience of 11-20 yr. Fishers having very high experience above 20 yr were 38.33%. Kumaran *et al* (2021) studied the socio-economic status of fishermen of Puducherry.

The marine fishing experience of fishers was compared for the different age groups. The result showed that the fishing experience of age

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Table 1. Socio-personal status of fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra (N= 152)

Sr. No.	Character	Category	Percentage
1.	Age (Year)	18-26	2
		26-34	17
		34-42	26
		42-50	16
		50-58	29
		58-66	8
		66-74	2
2.	Experience (Year)	0-5	3
		5-10	6
		10-15	15
		15-20	29
		20+	47
3.	Religion	Hindu	57
		Muslim	43
4.	Category	Open	14
		SBC	4
		OBC	81
		SEBC	1
5.	Gender	Male	100
6.	Marital status	Married	97
		Unmarried	3
7.	Educational status	Illiterate	4
		Can only sign	6%
		Primary	44
		Secondary	43
		Higher secondary	3
8.	Family type	Joint	54
		Nuclear	46
9.	House	Ancestor	78
		Constructed	22

groups 18-26, 26-34 and 34-42 yr each was significantly different from the fishing experience of every other age group shown in Fig.4. The experience of (42-50 year) age group was non-significant only with the experience of age group (50-58 year), whereas it was different from every other age group. The older age groups of (50-58 year), (58-66 year) and (66-74 year) were not significantly different from each other with

respect to the marine fishing experience.

Religion and category

Data on religious practices followed by respondent fishers was collected and subsequently classified into four distinct categories: Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Others. It was observed that 57% were Hindu, while 43% were Muslim, while no respondents from Christian or any other religious community were recorded. Similarly

Patilkhede *et al* (2017) revealed that there were 78.75% Hindus and 12.50% fishers belonged to Muslims and Christians. On the contrary Yadav *et al* (2020) studied socio-economic status of fishers of Ratnagiri, revealed that all the 100% respondents were of Hindu religion, whereas Kumar *et al*, (2017) showed that, there were 83.57% Hindus present in 2011-12 in his study. Muslims were 10.80% and remaining 5.63% were Christians. The category-related data were gathered from the fishers, which was then classified into distinct categories including Open, SC (Schedule Caste), ST (Schedule Tribe), OBC (Other Backward Class), NT (Nomadic Tribes), DT (Denotified Tribes), and SEBC (Socially Economically Backward Tribes). It was observed that 81% of the fisher population in the sample belonged to the OBC (Other Backward Class) category, followed by Open (14%), SBC (4%), and SEBC (1%).

Gender

In the study cent percent of the respondent fishers were males. Bhuyan and Islam (2016) reported that involvement of men and women in fishing was 86% and 14% respectively in Bangladesh.

Marital status

The marital status of the participants showed that a significant majority (97%) of the respondents were married, while 3% were not married. Yadav *et al* (2020) in his study found that 82.8% were married, 14.1% were unmarried and rest 3.1% were widow.

Educational status

Education is an important aspect as to consider the socio-economic status of a person. The study revealed that 44% of the fishers had successfully attained primary education, while secondary education was done by 43%, followed by some fisher have never gone to school but somehow they had learned to sign only were 6%, whereas 4% were categorized as illiterate. The remaining 3% had successfully completed education up to the level of higher secondary. Patilkhede *et al* (2017) in her study found that 47.08% were illiterate, 3.25% were functionally literate and only 6.67% had education till

mediatory. On the contrary, Kumari and Sharma (2022) reported that majority of the fishers were educated up to secondary level followed by primary, higher secondary and graduation.

Family type

Family plays an important role in considering social status. It has a major role in socialisation of an individual. The study has found that 54% were living in a joint family and 46% were living in nuclear family. Patilkhede *et al* (2017) study showed that 48.33% were living in nuclear family similarly, Yadav *et al* (2020) found that 62.5% lived in joint family and remaining 37.5% had a joint family.

House

The study revealed that all the individuals had their own house, out of which 78% had got it inherited from their ancestors and rest 22% had purchased or constructed their own house. Based on the year of house construction it was categorised before 2010 (14%), between 2010-2020 (84%) and after 2020 were 2%. Toraskar *et al* (2019) in his study reveals that all the participants were owners of their house.

Economic analysis

Annual income

The results clearly showed that the average annual income of fishers was in between the range of Rs.5.0 - 7.5 lakh. Overall distribution of average annual income showed that 24% of the respondents had an income of 0 - 2.5 lakh, followed by Rs. 2.5 - 5lakh (26%), Rs. 5 - 7.5lakh (28%), Rs. 7.5 - 10 lakh (20%), Rs. 10 - 12.5 lakh (1%), and the remaining 1% earns 12.5 - 15lakh. Notably, none of the respondents could reach beyond an average annual income of 15 lakh.

Bank account

The study revealed that 91% of fishers had bank account while the rest 9% did not had any bank account. Yadav *et al* (2020) in his study found that 84% fishers had bank account and rest 16% did not had any account in bank.

Indebtedness

The information related to indebtedness plays a major role in economic factor for an

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Table 2. Economical status of fishers of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra (N=152)

Sr. No.	Character	Category	Percentage
1.	Annual income (lakh)	0-2.5	24%
		2.5-5	26%
		5-7.5	28%
		7.5-10	20%
		10-12.5	1%
		12.5-15	1%
2.	Account in bank	Yes	91%
		No	9%
3.	Indebtedness	Yes	11%
		No	89%
4.	Purpose of loan	Repair and maintenance	70%
		Operating vessel	18%
		Boat construction	12%

individual. It was found that 89% of the fishers were unindebted and remaining 11% were indebted. Salim *et al* (2017) showed a total of 287 respondents had availed loan for different fishing purpose.

Purpose of loan

The reason for which the loan was used is a huge as an economic factor. The study revealed that 70% of the loan was utilized for repair and maintenance, 18% for the operation of the vessel, and 12% for boat construction. Salim *et al* (2017) studied the purpose of loan availed by fishers 49.7% availed loan either for house construction or for to purchase land. People who availed loan for gear purchase were 18% and marriage was the reason for loan by 16%.

CONCLUSION

The fishing practice plays an important role in national economic development of the nation. The study showed that fishers engaged in fishing are mostly males as it requires a lot of physical work. Most of fishers belonged to age group 50-58 yr of age. Mostly these fishers had education only up to primary level this affects the methods of living and the working conditions of the fishers. Therefore, the efforts should be taken such as giving information to them about the need

get education. This will help them to develop their mind set to adopt new technologies and follow rules. Priority in providing loans to them at low interest so that the would not be exploited by informal lenders. Different fishing techniques should be implemented in different regions with the help of State Fisheries Department (SFD).

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