SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF FISHERFOLK, A CASE STUDY OF COASTAL AREAS IN MALAPPURAM DISTRICT

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Abstract: : *Fishing has been one of oldest economic activities of human rise, comes next only to agriculture. Fisheries are an important sector in india, it provides employment to millions of people and contributes to food security of the country. Kerala has fish worker population of about 10 lakh. The density of population in the coastal area is 2168 person per kilomter square where as the state average is 859. Marine fishery has an important contribution towards the economy of kerala. The fisheries sector provides occupation to about 3.86 lakh people directly. Malappuram is the most populated district in kerala. The study identified the survival stratégies of fisher folk in malappuram district. Lack of proper infrastructure facilities causes the region and communities to live isolation from the mainstream. A total sample of 30 fisher folk family were surveyed through simple random sampling and interview schedule was used to obtain information from them*

Key Words: *Fisheries, kerala economy, fisher folks, survival strategies*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Fisher folks are the people who fish for the living or they are the members of a culture that is dominated by fishing. The poorest 40% of the world's population, In the developing world the livelihoods of the poor are highly dependent on natural resources. The natural resources they depend upon, however, are coming under intense pressure. This has led to degradation and depletion. Coastal areas are among the poorest of the poor, particularly in developing countries. The poor have relatively free access to the coastal seas; therefore, fishing is an opportunity of last resort to make a living. The open access nature of fishery relates to property rights and in reality the government (200 nautical miles of Exclusive Economic Zone) or community owns the property and use rights.

Traditionally, coastal fishing communities used to have different sets of rules and regulations to control and exert rights on individuals over this common property. These traditional institutional arrangements contributed indirectly to the conservation and sustainability of fish stocks, modern efficient extractive technologies, government control over the resources with ill-conceived coastal zone management regimes and increasing numbers in population dependent on coastal resources led to reductions in fish stock. A quite accurate estimate has now been made of which nations would suffer the most

Because a large percentage of the population lives in coastal regions. Bangladesh and Vietnam are extremely vulnerable. Nearly all the population and therefore most of the national economy of the low-lying archipelagos of the Maldives and the Bahamas are now under threat. In absolute numbers china is at top of the list. The most vulnerable regions in Europe are the east of England, the coastal strip extending from Belgium through the Netherlands and Germany to Denmark, and the southern Baltic Sea coast with the deltas of order and Vistula Rivers. There are also heavily- populated, flood prone areas along the Mediterranean and the black sea, such as the polenta of northern Italy and lagoon of Venice as well as the deltas of the Rhinos, Ebro Danube rivers.

Some of the densely-populated areas in the Netherlands, England, Germany and Italy already lie below the mean high-water mark. Without coastal defense mechanisms these would already be flooded today. For all these regions, therefore, the question of how fast the sea level will rise is extremely important and vital interest. We need to resolve how society can adapt itself to the new situation, and weather it might even be necessary to abandon some settlements in the future. Without appropriate coastal protection, even a moderate sea-level rise of few decimeters is likely to drive countless inhabitance of coastal area in Asia, Africa and Latin America from their homes, making them "sea-level refugees". The economic damage is likely to be enormous. The infrastructure of major harbor cities and especially regional trading and transportation networks which often involve coastal shipping or rivers transport would also be affected. In Europe on estimated 13 million people would be threatened by a sea-level rise of 1 meter. One of the implications would be high coasts for coastal protection measures. In extreme cases relocation may be the only solution. A total of a billion people worldwide now live within 20 meters of mean sea level on land measuring about 8 million square kilometres. This is roughly equivalent to the area of Brazil. These figures alone illustrate how

disastrous the loss of the coastal areas would be. Poor people's livelihood strategies are in the in the informal economy which consists of low paying jobs that are risk prone and extremely hard work.

Coastal hazardous play major role in today's society because it is part of human nature to near or along coast. Coast hazards are both natural and man-made disasters that happen along the coastline. 80% of people live near the coast, 1.2 billion people live within 100 km of the coast and it is on rise. Disasters along coastlines such as hurricanes, with high winds and swells, cause erosion. The population that lives along or near our coastlines is a vulnerable population. There are numerous issues facing our coastlines and there are two main categories in which these hazards can be placed under; natural disasters. Both of this issues cause great damage to our coastlines and discussion is still ongoing regarding what standards or responses need to be met to help both the individuals who want to continue living along the coastlines, while keeping them safe and not eroding more coastline away. Natural disasters are disasters that are out of human control and usually caused by the weather. Disasters that include but are not limited to; storms, tsunamis, typhoons, flooding, tides, water spouts, nor Easters and storm surge. Human disasters accure when human disasters are but are not limited to; with the pollutions, trawling and human development. Around 10 million people globally feel the effects of coastal problems yearly and most are due to certain natural hazards like coastal flooding with storm surges and typhoons. A major problem related to coastal regions deals with how the entire global environment is changing and in response coastal regions are easily affected. Storms are one of the major hazards that are associated to coastal regions. Storms, flooding and erosion are closely associated and can happen simultaneously.

Climate change is placing increasing pressure on coastal regions which are already seriously affected by intensive human activity. This raises the question of weather-or to want extent-these areas will retain their residential are economic value in the decades and centuries to come weather they may instead pose a threat to the human rise. Also we do not know what changes will occur to the coastal ecosystem and habitats such as mangroves, coral reefs, see grass, meadows and salt marshes that provide livelihood of coastal communities in many places.

More than a billion people-most of them in Asia-live in low- lying coastal regions. During the course of this century some of these areas could be inundated by rising sea levels. The inhabitants will be forced to find ways of coping with the water or to abandon some areas all together. In Asia, coastal communities face immediate challenges to their livelihood, from unsustainable production pattern leading to resources degradation intensified by coastal erosion and pollution of coastal waters. Fishing activities sustain a large number of fish resources and bio diversity deserves attention. Small – scale fisheries are critical for local food security and employment in many developing countries. The livelihoods of small-scale fishing and degradation of natural resources. They are faced with lack of employment opportunities and rapid population growth. They are often forced out of their habitats and displaced from coastal areas due to industrial development, tourism, pollution, environmental degradation and conflicts with large commercial fishing operations.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

1. To trace out the socio-economic conditions and survival strategies of fisher folk in coastal villages of malappuram district.
2. To analyze the availability of infrastructural facility and government assistance to the fisher folks.
3. To measure the soundness of the social security measures provided by the government to the fishing community.
4. To understand whether the fisher folks contented with the income they receive.

3. METHODOLOGY:

In order to examine the survival strategies of fisher folk, a survey is under taken in the coastal villages of Malappuram district. Primary data have been obtained from 30 fishermen households. They are interviewed with structured questionnaire. The sample is obtained using random sampling method. This was supplemented with secondary data are collected from publication and report of government organizations like economic reviews of different years, statistical report of various government departments, journals, articles and various websites.

4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Following are the main limitations of the study:

- The study based on limited samples has serious short comings and lack of predictive power.
- The primary information possesses a variety of data problem, because some respondents are not ready to open their mind and to reveal real situation due to baseless fear.
- The study is primarily limited by the inadequacy of time and resources.

5. RESULTS:

The abundance and diversity of fish resources in Kerala's inshore and sea is the result of unique geographical oceanographic features. According to recent figures, more than 1.5 million people depend on fisheries for their livelihood. Official figures states that there are around 150000 active fishermen along the Kerala coast, working both

traditional artisanal sectors as well as in the mechanized sector. According to the Kerala's NSDP, about 1.17% of the share is from fisheries sector; around 236714 Lakh

The fishing villages have a distinctive different appearance as compared to other village in Kerala and India. Because, the fishing villages are characterized by a very high density of population along the coast and are made up of a large number of houses clustered together and occupying the coast fringes of the state. Fisheries sector has been played a significant role in Kerala economy. But there is no equivalent benefit to the fisher folk compared to the other population in the state. The main aims of the study are to find out that socio economic conditions of the fisher folks.

- The major findings of this study are given below;

- Among the fisher folks only 6.6% are having annual income of above 18000, and a great majority of 63% having income below 6000.
- More than half of the collected samples are living BPL. Whereas the people included in the APL category has poor living standard.
- Most of the fisher folk have only primary education, while their children have education up to SSLC. Only few have higher education, which is to girls than boys.
- Most of the fisher folks belong to the age group 25-65, which constitute 90% of the total fisher folks. But all of them have not earning.
- As regarding to the ownership of the houses above 80% of the fisher folks have self owned houses. Out of that only 36.6% are tiled and 30% are huts. Around 20% of the samples have not self owned houses.
- From the collected samples more than 90% of the families are depending on few earners.
- The study reveals that 60% of the fisher folk community is using wells as their water source. The remaining 40% are using either pipe line or bore wells.
- In this study it is noticed that about 70% are depending private hospitals in town. Only few are approaching the public health care centers.
- The study shows that half of the people facing seasonal problems like flood, unemployment etc. but 43 % are facing both health problems as well as seasonal problems.
- By the study it finds out the financial problems related with fisher folk. Majority of them cannot give proper educational facilities to their children, because of low income.
- This study also reveals the financial problems regarding to the occupation of the fisher folks. There are around 15% of the families having no continuous job.
- Out of 30 samples collected 80% of the people have bank account, but among them 70% have loan instead saving. Only 20% have no experience with any banking institute.

6. CONCLUSION:

Fisher folk form an important segment of the populations of the state. Kerala has the eighth position with regard to the population of fisher folk among 14 coastal states. Fishing community has minimum quality of life, but they largely have been left out of the general development experience. In the case of literacy level, educational attainment of fisher folk is much lower than that of the general population.

To conclude, fishing has a significant impact upon economic conditions of coastal areas of malappuram district. It gives employment opportunities to almost every family. But, most of them are undertaking this work only because of their situation, which prove that the fisher folk are not satisfied with their income from fishing. Majority of the population have low income, it makes a poor living standard and also the ever increasing consumption expenditure of the state like Kerala make a risky livelihood to the people. Because of the low economic development and lack of basic infrastructural facilities, they have no proper educational attainment.

The marketing of fish is mainly centered on wholesale dealers and some other intermediaries. So, major part of the profit is concentrated to the intermediaries than the fisher folk. The Government of Kerala provides much financial assistance to the fisher folk through the fisheries cooperation. But, majority of coastal fisher folk is not aware about it due to asymmetric information.

The hypothesis set in the study can be tested by analyzing the collected data. It reveals that the socio-economic conditions of the fisher folk are very poor. It may be due to the inadequate income and greater average living expenses.

Since Kerala's geographical area is more suitable for fishing, it is possible to make drastic change in the sector of the state by giving much emphasis on it. Since fishing is an important job in Kerala, schemes and policies to attract more people to this field should be strengthened.

7. SUGGESTIONS:

In this study, a detailed discussion is done regarding the socio-economic conditions of the fisher folk. Here are certain suggestions for improving the present situation of coastal fisher folk and for reducing their difficulties.

- Since fishing has a prominent share in the GSDP of Kerala, the government should offer modern technologies in the field of fishing.
- The fisheries cooperation should provide adequate training facilities to fisher folks for improving their job condition.
- Government should provide adequate and proper infrastructural facilities in coastal area.
- The government should concentrate timely implementation of the schemes and programmes to fisher folk.
- Adequate measures should be taken to control the ill-omen of non-institutional finance in the coastal area.
- Government should provide awareness programmes to promote education among fisher folk.

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