
GOVERNMENT WELFARE SCHEMES AND ITS IMPACT ON STANDARD OF LIVING OF FISHER FOLK IN SOUTHERN COASTAL DISTRICTS OF TAMIL NADU

Article Particulars

Received: 26.02.2018

Accepted: 22.03.2018

Published: 28.04.2018

Dr.R.KARTHIKEYAN

Government Arts and Science College, Kadaladi, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

The aim of the present research paper is to analyse Government welfare schemes and its impact on livelihood of fisher folk. This study highlighted the gap in between Government welfare schemes and livelihood status of fisher folk. This survey was conducted randomly selected fisher folk (N=926) in southern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu especially Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari and Ramanathapuram Districts. The Central and State governments provide enormous financial assistance to fisher folk in different ways. During fishing ban season, Government provide financial assistance to meet their day to day livelihood expenditure. This financial assistance provided only for the fisher folk who registered their name in Fishermen Co-operative society. This study shows that majority (71.7%) of the fisher folk are registered. More than half (55.9%) of the fisher folk got relief from government after being hit by tsunami. This study also reveals that only 31% of the fisher folk get diesel at subsidized price. Majority of the children of fishermen who are Christians do not receive tsunami scholarship when compared to other religions. Ramanathapuram district is highly affected by tsunami. Fisheries department provides necessary information such as fishing availability, weather condition to protect fishermen from time to time.

Keywords: *Fisher folk, financial assistance, fishing ban season, fisheries, subsidized diesel and tsunami scholarship.*

Introduction

Fishermen co-operative society has been recognized as an important institution for the socio-economic upliftment of fisher folk in Kerala. The co-operative umbrella of Matsyafed comprises 292 primary co-operative societies with an average membership of 502, covers about 75 per cent of active fishermen of Kerala. On an average, 12.5 per cent active fishermen of Kerala were provided soft loan assistance for acquiring means of production through IFDP (D'Cruz, 1998)¹. The fisherfolk welfare scheme that aims to induct workers engaged in the fishery-related activities as members of the welfare fund. There are nine schemes for allied workers including Group Accident Insurance Scheme, Old Age Pension (OAP), SSLC cash award and scholarship, financial assistance for treatment of fatal diseases of allied workers and financial assistance for the marriage of daughters of fisher folk. In terms of range and coverage,

the schemes are really impressive (Kurien and Paul, 2000)². The performance of fishermen co-operative society is generally poor and majority of the fishermen co-operatives are only a means to channel government credit and for other purposes they are as good as non-existent. Reliable sources indicate that membership in co-operative societies in Tamil Nadu is sought mainly to facilitate access to the welfare schemes run by the state (GAIS, SCR and housing). It is also reported that repayment of loans taken in general has been poor (John Kurien, 1980)³.

Materials and Methods

Sample Size

Quantitative data was collected from 926 fisher folk indiscriminately selected from the four southern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu. Equal importance has been given in all districts fisher folk. In the field, data were collected through the questionnaire in the personal interview method in the sea shore and in the residence of fisher folk after obtaining informed consent from them.

Research Design

The survey examines government welfare schemes and standard of living of rural fisher folk during the period of January 2010 to January 2012 as a part of Doctoral research work. The welfare schemes and standard of living questionnaire was designed, which consisted of demographic questions (age, education, household size and caste) and 25 questions covering issues related to welfare schemes and livelihood status. The questionnaire was divided into three sections (1) a demographic section, (2) Government welfare schemes and (3) Standard of living fisher folk. The investigator and research assistants were trained in collecting data.

Pilot Study

The questionnaire was pre-tested by collecting data from 90 respondents in rural coastal villages from November and December 2010. This helped to confirm practical applicability, clarity and to avoid unnecessary questions and variables. The questionnaire was revised and restructured based on the results of the pilot study. Some additional questions were added after evaluating the questionnaires in the pilot study.

Data Analysis

The responses from fisher folk were examined by using a statistical package. Scores for each test category were calculated by assigning correct response. Mean response with standard deviation and percentage analysis of each category were calculated and presented in the tabular form. Cross tabulations, 'F' test and chi square tests at 5% significance level was used to compare indicators across demographic characteristics.

Results and Discussion

Membership Status of Fisherfolk in Fishermen co-Operative Society

The fisheries co-operative societies play a dynamic role in the upliftment of fishermen and fisherwomen in Tamil Nadu. Fisheries cooperatives are playing a vital role in the department in extending many welfare schemes to the members of the primary fishermen / women co-operative societies. About 6.19 lakh fishermen / fisherwomen have been enrolled as members of 1393 primary fishermen / fisherwomen co-operative societies, 54 fair price shops are run by the fishermen Co-operative Societies (Fisheries Policy Note, 2012-2013)⁴.

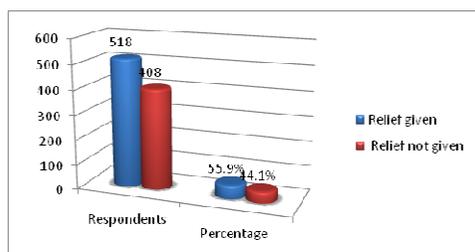
Table 1 Membership Status of Fisher folk in Fishermen Co-operative Society

Membership status in Fishermen Co-operative Society	Respondents	Percentage
Member	664	71.7
Non-Member	262	28.3
Total	926	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 describes the membership status of fisher folk in fishermen co-operative society. Majority of the fisher folk (71.7%) have registered as members in fishermen co-operative society. Only 28.3% of the fisher folk do not have membership in fishermen co-operative society. It is concluded that majority of the fisher folk have registered as members in fishermen co-operative society.

Figure 1 Relief from Government During Tsunami



Source: Primary Data

Figure 1 shows the government relief to the tsunami affected fisherfolk. More than half of the respondents (55.9%) got relief from government after being hit by tsunami. The remaining tsunami affected fisher folk (44.1%) report that they did not get any relief from government. Majority of the respondents have got relief from government in the tsunami affected places.

Table 2 Association of religion of Fisher folk and Governments' financial assistance during fishing ban season

Null Hypothesis: Religion of fisher folk does not influence the governments' financial assistance during ban season.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.068 ^a	2	.131*
Likelihood Ratio	3.962	2	.138
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.204	1	.073
N of Valid Cases	926		

*Significant at 5% level

Table 2 shows the relationship between religion of the respondents and the financial assistance during ban season. As the acceptance of null hypothesis ($P > .05$), there is no significant relationship between religion and financial assistance during ban season. It is clear from the analysis that financial assistance of government is not based on religion. The fisher folk get financial assistance from government during ban season irrespective of their religion.

Table 3 Community of Fisher folk and Governments' financial assistance during fishing ban season

Financial assistance of government		Communities			Total
		SC	BC	MBC	
Get financial assistance	Respondents	12	83	511	606
	Financial assistance	(2.0%)	(13.7%)	(84.3%)	(100.0%)
	Community	[80.0%]	[51.6%]	[68.1%]	[65.4%]
No financial assistance	Respondents	3	78	239	320
	Financial assistance	(.9%)	(24.4%)	(74.7%)	(100.0%)
	Community	[20.0%]	[48.4%]	[31.9%]	[34.6%]
Total	Respondents	15	161	750	926
	Financial assistance	(1.6%)	(17.4%)	(81.0%)	(100.0%)
	Community	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]

Source: Primary Data

The value within () denotes row percentage

The value within [] denotes column percentage

The community of fisher folk and governments' financial assistance during ban season is analysed in table 3. Majority of the respondents (65.4%) get financial assistance from the government. The fisher folk belong to MBC (84.3%) get more financial assistance from government. It is followed by, BC community (13.7%) and SC community (2%). Subsequently, 34.6% of the respondents do not get financial assistance from government during the ban season. In this category, nearly three fourths of the respondents (74.7%) belong to MBC, followed by BC (24.4%) and SC (0.9%). Majority of the respondents who belong to MBC community get financial assistance from government during ban season.

Table 4 Education and membership status in Co-operative society

Fishermen co-operative Society		Educational Level						Total
		Illiterate	Primary	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondary	College Level	
Member	Respondents	163	237	164	74	15	11	664
	Membership status	(24.5%)	(35.7%)	(24.7%)	(11.1%)	(2.3%)	(1.7%)	(100.0%)
	Educational Level	[69.4%]	[69.1%]	[73.2%]	[83.1%]	[75.0%]	[73.3%]	[71.7%]
Non Member	Respondents	72	106	60	15	5	4	262
	Membership status	(27.5%)	(40.5%)	(22.9%)	(5.7%)	(1.9%)	(1.5%)	(100.0%)
	Educational Level	[30.6%]	[30.9%]	[26.8%]	[16.9%]	[25.0%]	[26.7%]	[28.3%]
Total	Respondents	235	343	224	89	20	15	926
	Membership status	(25.4%)	(37.0%)	(24.2%)	(9.6%)	(2.2%)	(1.6%)	(100.0%)
	Educational Level	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]

Source: Primary Data

The value within () denotes row percentage

The value within [] denotes column percentage

Table 4 shows the relationship between the education and membership status in fishermen co-operative societies. Majority of the respondents (71.7%) have registered as members in fishermen co-operative society. In it, 35.7% of the respondents have completed primary education. It is followed by middle school (24.7%), illiterate (24.5%), high school (11.1%), higher secondary (2.3%) and college level (1.7%). Consequently, 28.3% of the respondents are not registered in co-operative societies. Among them, majority of the respondents (40.5%) have completed primary education, followed by illiterate (27.5%), middle school (22.9%), high school (5.7%), higher secondary (1.9%) and college level (1.5%). Majority of the respondents are registered as member in fishermen co-operative society.

Table 5 Tsunami Affected Districts

Districts		Tsunami		Total
		Affected	Not affected	
Thoothukudi	Respondents	125	70	195
	Districts	(64.1%)	(35.9%)	(100.0%)
	Tsunami	[17.9%]	[30.6%]	[21.1%]
Tirunelveli	Respondents	191	36	227

	Districts	(84.1%)	(15.9%)	(100.0%)
	Tsunami	[27.4%]	[15.7%]	[24.5%]
Ramanathapuram	Respondents	186	70	256
	Districts	(72.7%)	(27.3%)	(100.0%)
	Tsunami	[26.7%]	[30.6%]	[27.6%]
Kanyakumari	Respondents	195	53	248
	Districts	(78.6%)	(21.4%)	(100.0%)
	Tsunami	[28.0%]	[23.1%]	[26.8%]
Total	Respondents	697	229	926
	Districts	(75.3%)	(24.7%)	(100.0%)
	Tsunami	[100.0%]	[100.0%]	[100.0%]

Source: Primary Data

The value within () denotes row percentage

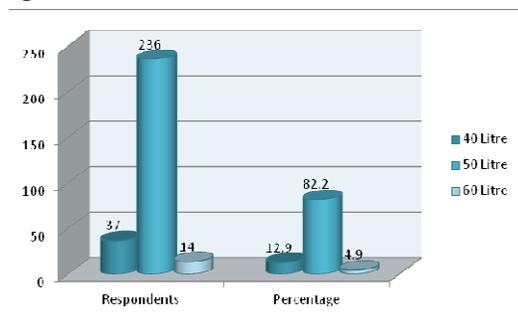
The value within [] denotes column percentage

Table 5 indicates that among majority of the tsunami affected respondents (27.6%) are in Ramanathapuram district. In which, 72.7% of the respondents were affected by tsunami and the remaining 27.3% of them were not affected. In Kanyakumari, most of them (78.6%) were affected by tsunami and 21.4% were not affected. In Tirunelveli district, most of the respondents (84.1%) affected by tsunami and the rest of them (15.9%) are not affected. Finally, 21.1% of the respondents are in Thoothukudi district. In it, 64.1% of the respondents were affected by tsunami and the remaining 35.9% of them were not affected by tsunami. Hence, majority of the respondents are affected in Ramanathapuram district when compared to other districts.

Distribution of Subsidized Diesel in a Week

The scheme is provided to the mechanized fishing boat owners who draw their diesel requirement for their boats from the diesel outlets of Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation Limited / co-operative sectors and other authorized private diesel bunks situated in Fishing Harbour Complex (GOT, 1997)¹⁰.

Figure 2 Distribution of subsidized Diesel in a Week



Source: Primary data

Figure 2 shows the quantity of diesel supplied at subsidized price. In the total respondents, most of them (82.2%) get 50 liters of diesel per week, 12.9% get 40 liters and the remaining 4.9% get 60 liters of diesel. Only a small percentage of respondents get 60 liters of diesel per week at subsidized price.

Conclusion

The natural disaster - tsunami hit the southern coastal areas severely. The most affected district was Ramanathapuram followed by Kanyakumari, Thoothukudi district was slightly disturbed by the tsunami. Government allotted financial assistance to tsunami hit areas. Some of the affected fisher folk could not receive the financial assistance due to non-supply of documents. They also did not receive any special tsunami scholarship for their children education. The tsunami scholarship is distributed to all fisher folk, irrespective of their education and caste. The fisher folk do not get sufficient subsidized diesel. Even the government allotted 60 liters in a week but majority of them are provided only 50 liters a week. So, the government must enhance the quantity of subsidized diesel and ensure a regular supply. Most of the fisher folk are members in the fishermen co-operative society. The government helps them through this society. Government gives financial assistance during ban season. Proper and sufficient information about weather condition and fish catchment places are informed to the fishermen.

References

1. D'cruz, S.T., (1998), Impact of Co-operativisation on Artisanal Marine Fisheries Sector of Kerala: The Role of Matsyafed, Proc of the Symp, On Technological Advancements on Rural Development held at Cochin, pp.559-565.
2. Kurien, J., and Paul A., (2000), Nets for Social Safety: An Analyses of the Growth and Changing Composition of Social Security Programmes in the Fisheries Sector of Kerala State, India, SAMUDRA Monograph, ICSF.
3. John Kurien (1980) Fishermen's Cooperatives in Kerala: A Critique, BOBP/MIS/1
4. Fisheries Policy Note (2012-2013) Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Department, Fisheries Policy Note 2012-2013 Demand No.7 .
5. Government of TamilNadu (1997)
www.tn.gov.in/budget/12thfincomm/topic_25.pdf.