GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT – REFLECTIONS AND UPSHOTS FROM FISHING INDUSTRY OF KERALA, INDIA

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Abstract
Mainstreaming aims at incorporating gender concerns as an integral element in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes so that benefits are shared equally and inequality isn’t perpetuated. UNDP (2008) opined that investing in women competencies and empowering them to exercise their choice is the surest way to sustain economic growth and development. In India, fisheries sector provides a livelihood for women as a source of supplementing fisher household income by their engagement in pre and post-harvest activities including marketing. The fisherwomen in Kerala assume significance due to their involvement in fish related activities leading to distribution, availability and value addition. The study focused the economic, social, political and legal empowerment of fisherwomen involved in processing and marketing across four occupational groups viz. fish retailer, fish vendor, dry fish makers, and value added fish producers and was based on primary data collected from fisherwomen households. The study analyzed empowerment levels using scoring indices and composite empowerment index for fisherwomen categories were estimated. The social and economic empowerment level was high with freedom in decision making and household expenditure. Handling, transporting and storage operations exhibited highest level of discrimination's. SHG’s and co-operatives were major networking institutions which augmented empowerment levels. Market intelligence and news were concerns of continuing discrimination's. The results indicated that the fisherwomen in Kerala possessed healthier composite fisherwomen empowerment index. Nevertheless appropriate institutional arrangements ensuring equal opportunities in fish marketing and processing and priority for institutional credit access will mend.
UNDP (2008) opined that investing in women capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choice is not only valuable itself but also the surest way to contribute to the economic growth and development.
Coast Length: 590 km
Continental shelf: 39139 km²
Exclusive Economic Zone: 0.2 M km²
Coastal districts: 9
Landing Centres: 187
Number of Fishing Villages: 222
Fishermen families/Active fishermen: 0.12 M
Average Family Size: 5.13
Adult-Child ratio: 2.67
Sex Ratio (F/1000 M): 966
Dependency of fisher families/km of coast length: 202
Population Intensity per fishing Village: 2748
Literacy rate:
Male: 72.50
Female: 72.40

Role of women in fisheries in Kerala

- Entrepreneurs: 2%
- Vendor: 26%
- Retailer: 23%
- Commission agents: 3%
- Processing: 12%
- Value addition: 12%
- Pre-processing: 15%
- Managers: 7%
Objectives

- to analyze the economic, social, political and legal empowerment of fisherwomen of fish processor and marketers
- To estimate the composite women empowerment index of fisherwomen in Kerala

Data and Methodology

![Bar chart showing percentage of fisherwomen in different categories across Northern, Central, and Southern Kerala.](chart.png)
Scoring method

Rank order correlation co-efficient

\[ r_s = 1 - 6 \frac{\sum d^2}{n^3 - n} \]

where,

\( d \) = difference in ranks assigned to a particular parameter among four different categories of fisherwomen,

and \( n \) = number of parameters under consideration or the highest rank.

Fisherwomen empowerment index

Mean Per cent Scores (MPS\(_i\)) = \( \sum \) Scores actually obtained for each fisherwomen/ Maximum possible score to be obtained * 100 where \( i \) parameter considered in a particular empowerment category

Fisherwomen Empowerment Index = \( \sum \) Scores actually obtained for each empowerment indicators / Maximum possible score for each parameter * 100

Composite Fisherwomen Empowerment Index (FEI\(_i\)) = \( \sum \) Scores actually obtained for each empowerment indicators / Maximum possible score for each parameter * 100

where, \( i \) denotes the four categories of empowerment indicators, viz. economic, social, political and legal.
Salient findings

- General Details
- Economic Empowerment – Gender Discrimination in the Economic Activities of Fisherwomen
- Social Empowerment – Decision making ability of fisherwomen
- Legal empowerment
  Access to legal process and systems
- Political empowerment
  Access to political systems and citizens power
- Empowerment indices across groups

Educational status of the fisher women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy level</th>
<th>Fish Retailer</th>
<th>Fish Vendor</th>
<th>Dry fish maker</th>
<th>Value added fish producer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>31.91</td>
<td>72.09</td>
<td>78.79</td>
<td>78.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate</td>
<td>59.57</td>
<td>23.26</td>
<td>21.21</td>
<td>8.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Income level of fisher women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Fisherwomen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish Retailer</td>
<td>5219</td>
<td>3945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Vendor</td>
<td>5340</td>
<td>3645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry fish maker</td>
<td>4147</td>
<td>2955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value added fish producer</td>
<td>12545</td>
<td>7245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic empowerment - Processors

- Equal participation in auctions: 21
- Purchasing prices of fish and fish products from the auction site / market: 25
- Hurdles in transportation of the products: 48
- Selling price of fish and fishery products at markets: 26
- Difficulty in storage of the products: 40
- Inability to exercise ties up with sales: 40
- Convenience: 20
- Difficulty in handling the bulk quantities of fish and fishery products: 48
- Exercising bargaining power during auction: 17
- Difficulty in getting credit: 28
**Economic Empowerment – Marketers**

- Equal participation in auctions: 30
- Purchasing prices of fish and fish products from the auction site / market: 33
- Hurdles in transportation of the products: 72
- Selling price of fish and fishery products at markets: 29
- Difficulty in storage of the products: 56
- Inability to exercise ties up with sales: 19
- Convenience: 58
- Difficulty in handling the bulk quantities of fish and fishery products: 69
- Exercising bargaining power during auction: 29
- Difficulty in getting credit: 29

**Social empowerment – Processors**

- Religious events: 68
- Choice of guest and entertainment: 60
- Spending money to their relatives: 57
- Marriage decisions (especially for): 44
- Decisions on the husband’s job/:
- Family planning (Number of):
- Purchasing the assets for home: 60
- Children’s education: 49
- Family health issues: 61
- Giving loan to others: 55
- Buying gifts for social functions: 52
Social empowerment – Marketers

- Religious events: 71
- Choice of guest and entertainment at family functions: 64
- Spending money to their relatives: 66
- Marriage decisions (especially for the wife): 64
- Decisions on the husband’s job/marriage: 9
- Family planning (Number of children): 51
- Purchasing the assets for home: 69
- Children’s education: 49
- Family health issues: 68
- Giving loan to others: 57
- Buying gifts for social functions: 58

Legal empowerment – Processors

- Opinion on the fairness of legal systems: 67
- Aversion towards in exercising legal rights: 72
- Discrimination during legal process: 60
- Knowledge about legal establishments: 76
- Access to legal systems: 74
- Timely redressal of concerns: 54
- Women Rights Awareness: 47
Legal empowerment– Marketers

Opinion on the fairness of legal systems: 59
Aversion towards in exercising legal rights: 65
Discrimination during legal process: 53
Knowledge about legal establishments: 68
Access to legal systems: 46
Timely redressal of concerns: 52
Women Rights Awareness: 41

Political empowerment– Processors

Awareness on the women reservation bill: 67
Awareness on the election process: 87
Membership in political entities/ organisation: 79
Knowing the elected representatives: 75
Exercise franchise in elections: 77
Level of Perception about political system: 85
Participation in Political process: 82
Political empowerment– Marketers

- Awareness on the women reservation bill: 60%
- Awareness on the election process: 87%
- Membership in political entities/organisation: 73%
- Knowing the elected representatives: 75%
- Exercise franchise in elections: 79%
- Level of Perception about political system: 82%
- Participation in Political process: 80%

Empowerment of fisherwomen in Kerala

- Dry fish maker
  - Economic: 56.72%
  - Social: 51.3%
  - Political: 51.3%
  - Legal: 51.3%
- Value added fish producer
  - Economic: 63.42%
  - Social: 55.28%
  - Political: 55.28%
  - Legal: 55.28%
- Vendor
  - Economic: 47.61%
  - Social: 49.85%
  - Political: 49.85%
  - Legal: 49.85%
- Retailer
  - Economic: 53.82%
  - Social: 53.24%
  - Political: 53.24%
  - Legal: 53.24%
Among the different categories of fisherwomen the empowerment of value added producers were highest and lowest for dry fish makers.

The fisherwomen were more politically empowered in Kerala and least empowered legally.

The results revealed that the composite fisherwomen empowerment index was high on comparison with agri sector.

Economic empowerment were limited for the women on account of were found to be handling of bulk quantities of fish and fishery products, transportation, storage,

The social empowerment were high for attending the religious events, caring about family health issues, purchasing the assets for home,

Fisherwomen had very less freedom to decide on their husband’s personal habits and business.

The legal empowerment is limited by the awareness on the women rights and its access.
The way forward......

- Appropriate institutional arrangements by way of bringing out guidelines for equal participation of fisherwomen women in auction, fixing of minimum quantities (quota) of fish for women
- Priority for fisherwomen to institutional credit access by the government agencies may lessen the gender discrimination of fisherwomen.
- Strengthening awareness and the access to the legal system is important

Economic Empowerment: disposal for the best selling price
Pricing the products based on dialogue

Array of value added products
Quality improvement in value addition

Bargaining at its best
Auction yard: waiting for the deal

Retailers: Waiting for the buyers
Vendors in search of potential customers

Retailers waiting for the landing centre prices to follow
Thank you all