

A STUDY ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN FISH VENDORS IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

D.ASWINI DHARMAN. Reg No: 20114011012004 (Ph.D Full time Research Scholar),

Department of Commerce, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University,
Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamilnadu. India.

Dr. K. RAJAMANNAR, M.Com., M.Phil, Ph.D., MBA., M.Lisc.,

Assistant Professor,

Department of Commerce, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-
627012, Tamilnadu. India.

ABSTRACT

One of the earliest economic occupations of the human race is fishing. It follows farming in importance. Across the years, millions of women have profitably traded fish all across the world. In addition to fishing, women also contribute significantly to other fishery-related tasks. Women in the fishing industry are not represented during fisheries planning, in landing-related planning, or in mainstream fisheries planning because they are categorised as working in the postharvest sector. The socioeconomic position of the fishermen's families has a significant impact on the role of women who sell seafood. The main aim of this paper is to analyse the socio economic factors of women fish vendors and Challenges and opportunities faced by women fish vendors in the Kanyakumari District. By using convenient sampling method, 150 women respondents have been selected from Agastheswaram and Killiyoor area. Primary data is collected via well-structured questionnaire, it consists of three parts like socio economic factors of respondents, Challenges faced by Women fish vendors and opportunities of women fish vendor in the Kanyakumari District. The result of this study showed that there is a significant relationship between monthly income and Challenges of Women fish vendors and year of experience and Opportunities of Women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District

Keywords: Women Fish Vendors, Kanyakumari District, Challenges and Opportunities

1. INTRODUCTION

The definition of a fish marketing system is the process by which fish captures from fish producers are distributed to fish consumers. Rao (1993) claims that unlike the marketing of agricultural products, the marketing of fish is plagued by a number of peculiar issues,

including greater production uncertainty, the highly perishable nature of fish, the need to combine fish catches from various landing sites, a wide variety of species and demand patterns, price fluctuations, and the need to transport fish using specialised vehicles. The growth of the nation's fishing industry depends heavily on the domestic markets. It contributes to reducing post-harvest losses, raising revenue, improving employment opportunities, and assuring food safety and security.

From a fisheries perspective, the coastal region of the Tamil Nadu state's Kanniyakumari district is crucial. On its three sides, it features a 71.5 km long coastal line. There are 42 communities along the 68 Kill coastline, home to 29120 fishing families and roughly 135000 fisherman. In total, Kanyakumari Districts contain 13 Blocks/Municipalities. The majority of the fish were caught by the fishermen, who largely ignored the women fish dealers.

Indian women who sell fish have low socioeconomic level. They face a variety of difficulties. Early in the morning, they barter with intermediaries to buy fish, then they carry it great distances as head loads. Some of them use share autos, which are a common form of transportation in Tamil Nadu. Despite being a perishable item that must be sold right away, fish must go through a lengthy process before being put on the market. Fish has to be sorted and cleaned. Sorting requires categorising the fish into three different types. Following the sorting process, it must be dried, which takes each lot two to four days to complete. Fish in large quantities are dried directly on the beach sands, close to the fish landing locations or on populated beaches.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Annish Vinotha M and Joseph Arul Suresh A (2019), in their research study "A Study on Marketing Performance of Women Fish Vendors" examined the volume of operation of head loading fish vendors per day and analysed the price variation of fish species during the lean, middle, peak seasons. It was discovered that those working in the marketing industry have numerous challenges, including issues with their health, finances, cleanliness, and schedules, as well as a significant workload. 28 percent of vendors report being the target of sexual harassment. They admit that it happens frequently in the marketing industry and that they must approach it bravely. It depends on their bravery and resolve.

Joice Jegadeswari J and Ashok Kumar E (2021) in their research article, "A Study on the Challenges faced by the Women Fish Vendors with Special Reference to Chennai" studied the knowledge of fisherwomen about the legal legislation available to them and

traced the fisher women working hours and health hazard in Chennai. The involvement of middlemen, the issue of transportation costs, the high cost of marketing, the delay in payment of sale proceeds, ignorance of market information and current prices, a high degree of dependence on middlemen for financial support, and a lack of infrastructure facilities in the market place are found to be the main issues faced by women fish vendors in the study area. The study recommended that the government establish efficient marketing infrastructure, set minimum support prices for fish, and mandate that fish vendors have access to facilities for cleaning and drying their catch. In their selling location, more drinking water and restrooms should be made available to them.

Jeno Delcy C and Immanuel R (2022), in their research article on “A Study on the Challenges of Women Fish Vendors in Thoothukudi District” analyzed the market activities of women fish vendors in the study area and found out the Challenges faced by the women fish vendors. Due to the seasonal nature of fishing and the very variable nature of its earnings, the women who sell fish have little money, not even enough to cover their basic dietary needs. In order to boost their family's income, the fisherwomen may be encouraged to raise goats, poultry, or vegetables in their homes. It has been suggested that the government should make it easier for women fish vendors to obtain low-interest lending facilities from banks.

Rajeswari M (2023), in her study on "The Plight of Women Fish Vendors in Tamil Nadu: Challenges and Solutions" assessed the impact of credit access on the income of women fish vendors and identified the health hazards faced by women fish vendors and determine the role of formal education in mitigating those hazards. The study came to the conclusion that the Challenges faced by Tamil Nadu's female fish merchants are complex and call for an all-encompassing solution. Women who sell fish suffer a variety of difficulties, including restricted market access, discrimination, a lack of social protection, risks to their health, and social shame. The study offered suggestions for ways to empower women fish merchants, including increasing access to money, advancing infrastructure and technology, assuring health and safety, and offering legal protection.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite making a modest living, most of the women who work as fish vendors are uneducated due to the community's poor economic standing. They struggle to manage the family because their income is inconsistent and they have poor spending habits. In India, thousands of people have relied on the traditional occupation of selling fish for a living; most

fish vendors are women. When compared to men, women make up the bulk of the vendors in the Kanyakumari District. They have had numerous difficulties at work as well. Hence this study focus on Challenges and opportunities of women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find the socio economic factors of women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District
- To examine the Challenges and opportunities of women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District

5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Ho: There is no significant relationship between monthly income and Challenges of Women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District

Ho: There is no significant relationship between year of experience and Opportunities of Women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is fully descriptive in nature. By using convenient sampling method, 150 women respondents have been selected from Agastheswaram and Killiyoor area. Primary data is collected via well-structured questionnaire, it consists of three parts like socio economic factors of respondents, Challenges faced by Women fish vendors and opportunities of women fish vendor in Kanyakumari District. Secondary data is collected via journals, magazines, books and newspapers. Percentage Analysis, Weighted average method and Kurskal Wallis test were used to analyse the collected data.

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 Socio Economic Factors

Socio economic factors of women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District include Age, Educational Qualification, Year of experience, and Monthly income.

Table-1

Socio Economic Factors of Women Fish Vendors

S.No	Variables	Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	21 – 30 Years	13	8.67
		31 – 40 Years	93	62.0
		40 – 50 Years	24	16.0

		Above 50 Years	20	13.33
		Total	150	100
2.	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	06	4.0
		School level	40	26.67
		Graduate	58	38.67
		Post Graduate	24	16.0
		Professional	22	14.67
		Total	150	100
4.	Year of Experience	Below 1 Year	42	28.0
		1 Year to 3 Year	16	10.67
		3 Years to 5 Years	68	45.33
		5 Years to 8 Years	14	9.33
		Above 8 Years	10	6.67
		Total	150	100
5.	Monthly income	Below Rs.10000	47	31.33
		Rs.10001–Rs. 20000	58	38.67
		Rs.20001–Rs. 30000	27	18.0
		Above Rs. 30000	18	12.0
		Total	150	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table -1, it is observed that among total 150 women fish vendors, 13 of them belong to the age group 21 to 30 years, 93 of them belong to the age group 31-40 years, 24 vendors belong to the age group 40-50 years and 20 of them are above 50 years. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of the women fish vendors, 93 (62.0 per cent) of them belong to the age group 31-40 years.

Based on the educational qualification, among 150 women fish vendors, 6 of them are illiterates, 40 vendors have qualifies up to school level, 58 of them are graduates, 24 vendors are post graduates and 22 of them are professional fish vendors. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of the women fish vendors, 58 (38.67 per cent) of them are graduates.

Based on the number of years of experience, 42 vendors have less than one year of experience, 16 of them have 1 to 3 years of experience, 68 of them have 3 to 5 years of experience, 14 of them have 5 to 8 years of experience and 10 of them have more than 8 years of experience. Thus it can be concluded that the majority of the women vendors, 68 (45.33 per cent) of them have 3 to 5 years of experience.

Based on the monthly income, among total 150 women fish vendors, 47 of them have monthly income below rs.10000, 58 of them earn a monthly income between rs.10000 to rs.20, 000, 27 of them have a monthly income of rs.20000 to rs.30000 and 18 of them earn a monthly income more than rs.30000. Thus it can be concluded that the majority of the women vendors, 58 (38.67 per cent) of them earn a monthly income between rs.10000 to rs.20, 000.

7.2 Reason to enter this profession

The following table shows various reasons for women fish vendors to select this particular profession

Table-2
Reason to enter this profession

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
To earn more income	42	28.0
Assisting the parents in the traditional job	16	10.67
Poverty	68	45.33
Self interest	14	9.33
Friends influence	10	6.67
Total	150	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table-2, it is observed that among total 150 women fish vendors, 42 of them have chosen this profession to earn more income, 16 of them to assist their parents in

their traditional job, 68 of them due to poverty to earn a livelihood, 14 of them due to their own interest and 10 of them under the influence of their friends. Thus it can be concluded that the majority of the women fish vendors, 68 (45.33 per cent) of them have chosen this profession due to poverty.

7.3 Challenges faced by Women Fish Vendors

Table-3 analyses the major Challenges faced by the women fish vendors in the Kanyakumari District.

Table-3
Challenges faced by Women Fish Vendors

Challenges	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Dis Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Lack of infrastructural facilities	230 (46)	228 (57)	36 (12)	52 (26)	09 (09)	555 (150)
Lack of freedom in the working place	140 (28)	160 (40)	84 (28)	68 (34)	20 (20)	472 (150)
Problem of Finance	290 (58)	224 (56)	18 (06)	38 (19)	11 (11)	581 (150)
Health Problem	180 (36)	196 (49)	60 (20)	48 (24)	21 (21)	505 (150)
Lack of improvement in marketing system	230 (46)	116 (29)	60 (20)	62 (31)	24 (24)	492 (150)
Lack of Storage Facility	190 (38)	208 (52)	45 (15)	50 (25)	20 (20)	513 (150)

Source: Primary Data

As per the above table, Financial Problem and Lack of infrastructural facilities are the dominant Challenges of Women fish Vendors in the Kanyakumari District.

7.4 Opportunities of Women Fish Vendor

Table-4 analyses the major opportunities of women fish vendors in the Kanyakumari District.

Table-4
Opportunities of Women Fish Vendor

Opportunities	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Dis Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Increase in revenue	240 (48)	128 (32)	54 (18)	44 (22)	30 (30)	496 (150)
Increase in purchasing power	230 (46)	116 (29)	60 (20)	62 (31)	24 (24)	492 (150)
Food Scarcity solved	170 (34)	92 (23)	90 (30)	56 (28)	35 (35)	443 (150)
Reduced Debt burden	255 (51)	168 (42)	33 (11)	52 (26)	20 (20)	528 (150)
Increase in economic independence	160 (32)	84 (21)	99 (33)	58 (29)	35 (35)	436 (150)
Improvement in children education	250 (50)	196 (49)	45 (15)	42 (21)	15 (15)	548 (150)

Source: Primary Data

As per the above table, Improvement in children education and Reduced Debt burden are the dominant Opportunities of Women fish Vendors in the Kanyakumari District.

7.5 Relationship between monthly income and Challenges of Women fish vendors

Ho: There is no significant relationship between monthly income and Challenges of Women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District

To analyse the relationship between monthly income and Challenges of Women fish vendors, Kruskal Wallis test is done and the results are given in the below table.

Table-5

Relationship between relationship between Monthly Income and Challenges of Women Fish Vendors – Result of Kruskal Wallis test

Particulars	Level of Respondents
Calculated Value	31.237
H -value	0.0321
Significant level	5%
Ho	Rejected
Inference	Significant

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The above Table 5 shows that the H value (0.0321) is less than the 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between monthly income and Challenges of Women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District.

7.6 Relationship between year of experience and Opportunities of Women fish vendors

Ho: There is no significant relationship between year of experience and opportunities of women fish vendors in Kanyakumari District

To analyse the relationship between year of experience and opportunities of women fish vendors, Kruskal Wallis test is done and the results are given in the below table.

Table-6

Relationship between Year of Experience and Opportunities of Women Fish Vendors– Result of Kruskal Wallis test

Particulars	Level of Respondents
Calculated Value	28.241
H -value	0.0265
Significant level	5%
Ho	Rejected
Inference	Significant

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The above Table 6 shows that the H value (0.0265) is less than the 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between years of experience and opportunities of women fish vendors in the Kanyakumari District

8. SUGGESTIONS

- The bankers must provide the required finance to the women fish vendors and remove the exploitation of the money lenders.
- Government should create hygienic and good infrastructural fish markets for Women fish vendors.
- Government should provide more welfare schemes for women fish vendors for improving their socioeconomic condition.

9. CONCLUSION

The women fish vendors are almost neglected in this field as the maximum amount of fishes are caught by the fishermen. Women fish vendors are always physically and mentally weaker and affected by the local rowdies and policemen. They lose their earnings to such policemen and rowdies in force. The current law is not much effective to the fisheries and their family. The women fish vendors of the artisanal fisheries belong to one of the poorest groups in the coastal rural areas. Socio and infrastructural facilities have also been developed in the coastal villages to a greater extent to improve the growth of the economy. Hence, society and the government should take the necessary measures to remove these obstacles, which affect the life of the women fish vendors.

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