

RESEARCH PAPER

Constraints faced and suggestions given by the fisher women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka

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Abstract: The marine fisheries sector in Karnataka plays a crucial role in the livelihoods of coastal communities, where women contribute significantly in post-harvest activities. Despite their vital role, fisherwomen face numerous challenges that hinder their socio-economic advancement. The study aims to identify the constraints faced by fisherwomen involved in marine fisheries in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. A sample of 120 respondents were selected through random sampling method. Study revealed the general, employment-related, and marketing constraints faced by the fisherwomen. High debt, lack of infrastructure, seasonal employment exploitation by middlemen, educational illiteracy, lack of storage and transportation facilities were the major constraints faced by the fisherwomen. The findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions and policies to address these challenges, thereby enhancing the economic empowerment and well-being of fisherwomen in the region.

Key words: Constraints, Fisherwomen, Marine fisheries, Post-harvest activities

Introduction

Fisheries sector is known as the sunrise sector of Indian economy. Around 28 million people, either directly or indirectly, are involved in the activities of the sector (Including both marine and inland sectors) of which 44.00 per cent were women (DoF, 2022). Out of the 4.9 million marine fisherfolk, 47.00 per cent were women. Among the 23 million inland fisherfolk, 44.00 per cent were women. Women dominate the post-harvest activities like curing (drying), peeling of prawn, processing and working as labourers. Ninety per cent and 95.00 per cent of the fisherfolk involved in curing/processing and prawn peeling is women. Majority of the peripatetic vendors who walk from place to place to sell their fish are usually women, who purchase fish directly from auctions held at wholesale markets/landing centres. They sell fish door-to-door, travelling on foot and carrying fish as headloads. Yet their role is unrecognised and they are facing many challenges. Hence, the present study helps to understand the constraints faced by the fisherwomen in marine fisheries.

Material and methods

The study was conducted in Uttara kannada district of Karnataka during the year 2023-24. Karwar and Ankola taluks were selected through purposive random sampling method as majority of the fisherwomen from these taluks were involved in marine fisheries. A total of 120 respondents (from Karwar 60 respondents and from Ankola 60 respondents) were selected through random sampling method. Pretested interview schedule was used to collect the data and analysed data by using garrets ranking.

Results and discussion

Results from the Table 1 revealed various constraints faced by fisherwomen participating in post-harvest activities of marine

fisheries in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. The constraints are categorized into three main sections: General constraints, employment related constraints and marketing related constraints.

The study revealed that, in case of general constraints expressed by the fisherwomen high debt ranked first with the mean garret's score 67.02, followed by alcoholism of men fisher folk and exploitation ranked second with mean garret's score 62.50, educational illiteracy ranked third with mean garret's score 53.14, poor living conditions and livelihood security ranked fourth with mean garret's score 52.53, gender inequality ranked fifth with mean garret's score 51.93, scientifically less advanced ranked VI with mean garret's score 37.58, cultural bonding, customs, traditions, conservatism ranked VII with mean garret's score 24.30.

In case of employment related constraints expressed by the fisherwomen seasonal employment ranked I with the mean garret's score 68.17, long working hours ranked II with the mean garret's score 58.69, no minimum wage fixation ranked III with mean garret's score 57.96, low wage ranked IV with mean garret's score 56.94, health problems ranked V with mean garret's score 47.68, gender discrimination at workplace and no health insurance coverage ranked VI and VII with mean garret's score 34.90 and 24.67, respectively.

In case of marketing related constraints uncertainty in price ranked I with the mean garret's score 67.23, lack of transportation facility ranked II with the mean garret's score 66.18, lack of hygiene condition ranked III with mean garret's score 59.00, inability to carry long distance ranked IV with mean garret's score 57.13, lack of infrastructure facility ranked V with mean garret's score 42.73, competition from other relatives ranked VI

Table 1. Constraints faced by fisherwomen participating in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries (n=120)

Constraints	Uttara Kannada		
	Garrett's score	Mean Garrett's score	Rank
I. General constraints (*)			
Poor living conditions & livelihood security	7500	52.53	IV
Educational illiteracy	6377	53.14	III
Gender inequality	6232	51.93	V
Alcoholism of men fisher folk & exploitation	6304	62.50	II
Scientifically less advanced in post-harvest activities	4509	37.58	VI
Cultural bonding, customs, traditions, conservatism	2916	24.30	VII
High debt	8042	67.02	I
II. Employment related constraints (*)			
Low wage	8180	56.94	IV
Long working hours	7043	58.69	II
Seasonal employment	6833	68.17	I
No health insurance coverage	2960	24.67	VII
No minimum wage fixation	5721	57.96	III
Health problems	6955	47.68	V
Gender discrimination at work place	4188	34.90	VI
III. Marketing related constraints (*)			
Middlemen exploitation	3456	28.80	VIII
Lack of cold storage facility	4572	38.10	VII
Lack of transportation facility	7941	66.18	II
Inability to carry to a long distance	8067	57.13	IV
Uncertainty in price	6855	67.23	I
Lack of infrastructure facility	5127	42.73	V
Lack of hygiene condition	7080	59.00	III
Competition from other retailers	4902	40.85	VI

*Multiple responses are possible



Fig.1: Map of the study area

with mean garret's score 40.85, lack of cold storage facility ranked VII with mean garret's score 38.10 and middle men exploitation ranked VIII with mean garret's score 28.80.

The high debt levels of fisherwomen indicate a lack of financial stability and security, which hinders their ability to manage their daily expenses, invest in their businesses and

develop economically. Alcohol addiction among fishermen lead to the increased debt and reduced income among the fisherwomen families. Most of the fisherwomen in the study area were illiterates, according to the fishermen community, education is not seen as a necessary requirement. Instead, they often involve their children in fishing and related work from a young age. They believe this could assist them in meeting their family's financial needs now a days this trend had been changed and some of the fisherfolk are willing to send their children to schools for proper education. Fisherwomen also expressed health problems was their constraint they often find themselves in squatting or bending postures while engaging in various

Table 2. Suggestions given by fisherwomen involved in marine fisheries (n=120)

Suggestions (*)	Uttara Kannada f (%)
Government should provide transportation facilities for marketing of fish to other places	50 (41.67)
Government should develop programmes and policies for women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries	120 (100.00)
State fisheries department should take some actions regarding to provide the information relating to various schemes for the fisherwomen	120 (100.00)
Government should provide trainings on marketing and income generating activities	40 (33.33)
Government should provide storage facilities	82 (68.33)
Hygienic work environment to be provided by municipal local bodies	55 (45.83)
Construction of proper market places with basic facilities for fish marketing	52 (43.33)

activities such as drying, grading, cleaning, and cutting which led to significant health concerns such as joint pain, back pain and overall body discomfort. Women selling fish often go from door to door, carrying heavy loads on their heads. "I often experience headaches, leg pains, and occasionally fatigue and whole-body pain, especially on sunny day" expressed by the fisherwomen. They have to travel distances of 20 to 30 km sometimes, bus drivers may not allow people to board if they detect a strong fish odor and using private vehicles can be quite costly. Fisherwomen facing challenges due to the unpredictable fish prices, making it difficult for them to predict their earnings, handle their finances. Changes in prices greatly affect profits, possibly resulting in lower earnings and financial losses. Uncertainty may lead to limited access to credit and loans. Women expressed their concerns about the lack of storage and preservation facilities at the community level, as well as the inadequate infrastructure facilities. Fish doesn't last very long. In the rainy season, the dried fish can get wet due to insufficient storage. Wet fish is not suitable for human consumption, resulting in the spoilage of the fish. Lack of essential facilities for storing, processing and accessing clean water and ice, as well as proper waste disposal measures. Facilities like these are crucial for ensuring the proper handling of fish, promoting the health and well-being of both vendors and consumers.

The viewpoints of Salim (2013), Rashdi and Mclean (2014), Vipinkumar and Asokan (2014), Jayaraman (2017), and Farooqi *et al.* (2018), Dhamodharan and Raveendran (2022) were similar to the results presented in the study.

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Multiple responses are possible

It is evident from Table 2 that cent per cent of the fisherwomen from both taluks suggested that government should develop programmes and policies for women involved in post-harvest activities of marine fisheries and state department of fisheries should take actions regarding providing the information relating to various schemes for the fisherwomen. More than two third of the fisherwomen suggested storage facilities should be provided by government, 68.33 per cent suggested that government should provide storage facilities, 45.83 per cent suggested municipal local bodies should provide hygienic work environment followed by, construction of proper marketplaces with basic facilities for fish marketing (43.33%), provision of transportation facilities by government for marketing of fish to other places (41.67%), government should provide trainings on marketing and income generating activities (33.33%) above findings are in line with Rajeswari (2023).

Conclusion

The research reveals significant constraints faced by fisherwomen in Uttara Kannada, emphasizing the pressing need for systemic interventions. High debt, inadequate infrastructure, and seasonal employment emerge as critical barriers to their economic and social progress. Addressing these issues through government policies, improved access to resources, and community-based initiatives can significantly uplift the livelihoods of fisherwomen. Ensuring gender equity in the fisheries sector is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for the sustainable development of coastal communities in Karnataka.