



Role of Women in the Development of Fisheries in Jammu District of J&K

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Abstract

In the Present paper, Jammu District was surveyed to analyze the role played by women in the development of fisheries. Various constraints and problems were studied in the study area. Primary data during survey was collected with the help of questionnaires and interviews with the women folk. Primary data was also supplemented by the secondary data from the fisheries Department. Based on the observation and limitations, the women are facing in the study area, few recommendations have been made, which if, followed in the earnest way can go long way in improving the socio-economic status of women on one hand and development of fisheries on the other hand.

Keywords: Constraints, fisheries development, recommendations.

Introduction

In spite of so many initiatives and development programmes launched by govt. of India wiz a wiz govt. of J&K, the rural women are leading a suppressed and a miserable life still she is uneducated, illiterate and bear the burden of a family as well as the burden of agricultural operations etc.

Women are always considered as the weakest in the society capable of doing nothing except child bearing and home making¹. In our state (J & K), the fisheries is dominantly perceived as activity of men though traditionally women have been playing a major role in agriculture, but traditionally it is the men who control household and the society and hold the sovereign power and women are always placed in a lower hierarchy compared to men².

Women's participation in fisheries is secondary or subordinate to men because of their illiteracy, social and cultural taboos. Furthermore; most of the economic policies and other welfare schemes are gender biased and are not in accordance with the needs of women. There are some gender biased discrimination with in the household that includes access to resources, control over family, consumption pattern and freedom for domestic expenditure³.

In J&K state women are contributing meaningfully in all the sectors including agriculture, fisheries and many other areas but their work is never been recognized. Unequal allocation of resources further strengthens the non-recognition of women labour in domestic field⁴. Women role is generally unrecognized, undocumented and ignored, men may construct the ponds but once built, the ponds usually become the women's domain⁵. Fisheries in general have long been considered a male occupation despite the major role played by females. So no specific efforts have been made to integrate women into aquaculture extensions and training programmes⁶ also the high

degree of women's involvement in the management of fish has been ignored and remains adequately addressed.

It is generally the women, who feed the fish, manage the pond, take care of the crop, yet aquaculture is considered men's work and women has also been struggling with various socio-economic constraints which has great impact on the productivity in the agriculture sector⁷. Though there is a lot of change in the attitude of people towards the role of the women in various areas but still their role is considered as complimentary as well as conflicting with that of men⁸.

In brief, it can be said that in spite of large efforts of govt. women in rural area is still illiterate, ignorant and has no access to information technology and financial institutions etc. with the result, she is not aware of the departmental initiatives launched by the govt. for their development.

Objectives of the study: i. To analyze the potential of fisheries in Jammu District. ii. To study the involvement of women in fisheries development. iii. To study the various constraints faced by the women in the fisheries sector and to suggest few recommendations to bring further improvement in fisheries development in the study area.

Profile of the Study Area: District of the JandK state of Jammu is located in the northernmost area of India. It has vast potential for fishery resources for development of aquaculture. Geographically Jammu province has been identified as the most diverse habitat for both cold and warm water fisheries because of varied and favourable climatic conditions. At present Jammu Province have 10 districts, out of which Jammu district is purposively selected because it has highest number of private and govt. sponsored ponds and the total catch of the district is 10751.76 quintals which accounts to 35% of the total production of the province.

Methodology

Jammu district was selected as the study area mainly because of the enhancement in fisheries activities. 100 women respondents were randomly selected for the study. Primary data for study were used in the form of questionnaire which was administered to the respondents. In addition, personal interview method was also used to collect the data. Data collected were on the involvement of women directly/indirectly in fisheries and various constraints faced by them in adopting the fisheries as a profession. Secondary data was collected from the concerning fisheries departments and data was analyzed and computed by simple statistics.

Results and Discussion

Jammu District has a vast potential as regards to fish and fishers is concerned the national water comprises of rivers and nullahas covers about 440 Kms of this district besides this Jammu District at present has about 67 Govt. sponsored and about 41 predicate ponds and average production of the District (both from capture and culture fisheries) is 10751.76 quintals/yrs. Table-1 shows that Jammu district has highest production of fisheries in Jammu Province.

Table-1
Fish Production of various districts of Jammu Province for the last 3 Yrs (Qtls./year)

| District | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| Jammu | 9441.00 | 10008.00 | 10752.00 |
| Samba | 1602.00 | 1880.64 | 3595.70 |
| Kathua | 5121.00 | 5346.00 | 4914.75 |
| Rajouri | 5580.00 | 5094.00 | 8850.00 |
| Reasi | 3249.00 | 2750.00 | 2506.00 |
| Ramban | 1035.00 | 1161.00 | 796.00 |
| Doda | 3006.00 | 3294.00 | 2481.50 |
| Poonch | 3789.00 | 3834.00 | 2088.40 |
| Kishtwar | 1332.00 | 1971.00 | 894.30 |
| Udhampur | 5085.00 | 5346.00 | 8964.00 |

Sources: Fisheries Survey Report of district office Jammu (2013-14)

Role of women in fisheries: It has been observed that in the study area, women are indirectly involved in various agriculture activities such as stocking of pond. Feeding of fish, Pond management liming, fish feed production and harvesting but direct involvement of women folk in fisheries is very very negligible. The study seeks to broadly understand the role of fisheries in the empowerment of women. It has been observed that in the district Jammu, fish production is highest of all districts of Jammu province total ponds of the district at present including all private, govt. sponsored and community ponds are 336 (as per the records of govt. fisheries department).

Though lots of efforts are being done by the govt. to increase fish production, but very less attention is paid to women folk for the adoption of fisheries as a profession by playing a direct role in fisheries direct role of women in fisheries is very very insignificant, few women are directly involved in fisheries. Percentage of female beneficiaries is very low i.e out of 171 ponds (both private and govts sponsored) female beneficiaries (owner of the pond) are only 7 in number which comes to be only 4.09% whereas their indirect roles are very significant. Various indirect roles played by women are shown in the table 2.

Table-2
Depicting Degree of involvement of women in various indirect fisheries related activities

| Activities | Regular Involvement | Irregular Involvement | Seldom Involvement | No Involvement |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Fish Stocking | 15 | 26 | 47 | 12 |
| Feed Preparation | 35 | 35 | 10 | 20 |
| Feeding of Fish | 80 | 12 | 6 | 2 |
| Liming of Pond | 42 | 38 | 12 | 8 |
| Pond Supervision | 60 | 31 | 4 | 5 |
| Harvesting | 30 | 25 | 28 | 17 |
| Marketing | 5 | 10 | 20 | 65 |

N-100, (N-simple size of women farmers), (Sources: field survey)

As seen from the table 2, In spite of so much involvement in the fisheries, no recognition is given to female. Even no specific effort has been made for proper motivation of women folk into the fisheries sector. Table also reveals that 15% of women are involved in fish stocking, 35% in feed prep., 80% for feeding the fish, 42% for liming the pond, 60% pond supervision, 30% Harvesting and 5% marketing. In spite of so much work done by female indirectly, very less percentage of women is directly involved in fisheries.

If we see the present scenario, direct involvement of women in Jammu province is very insignificant as compare to southern states of the country and other countries women in the study area are facing lots of constraints in the field of fisheries.

Table-3

| Constraints | Mean | Order |
|--|-------|-----------------------|
| 1. Social taboo (social, cultural and religious Restrictions) (50-50%) | 52.5% | 1st Order |
| 2. Non access to extension services (25-30%) | 27.5% | 2 nd Order |
| 3. Lack of collateral to obtain bank Loans/ subsidies etc (21-34%) | 32.5% | 3 rd Order |

Various constraints faced by women are depicted in table 3. Sources: fish survey from the study area

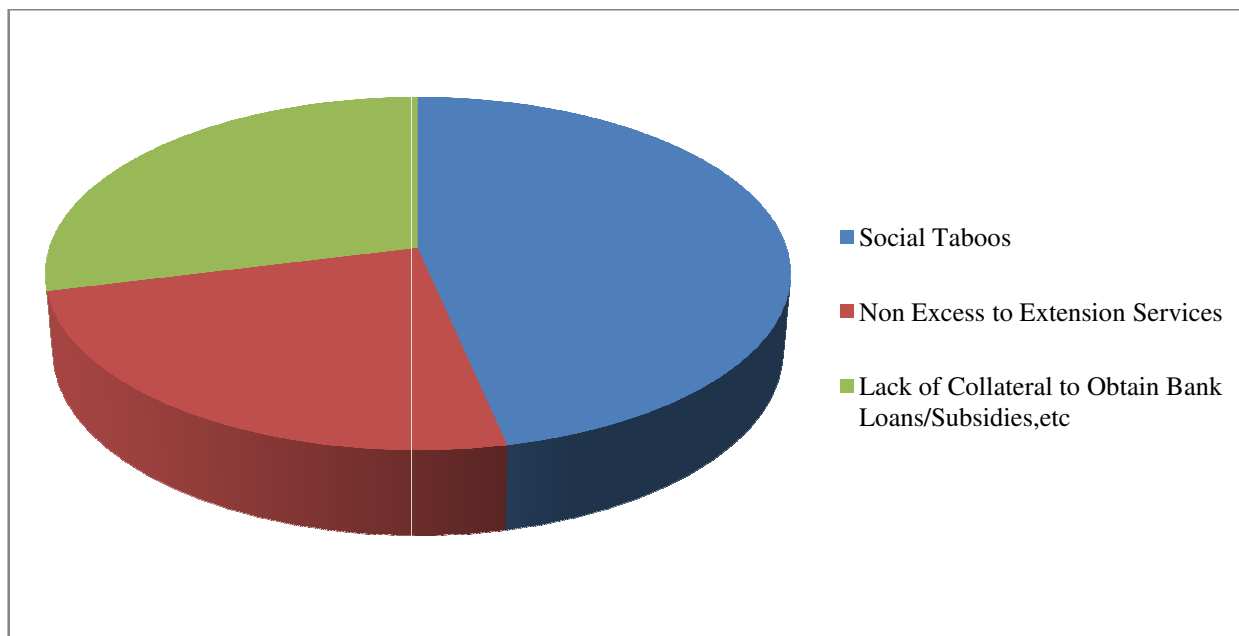


Figure-1
Showing various constraints faced by the women

Table 3 and figure-1 shows that out of 3 main constraints faced by women folk, social taboo is the major constraints (52.5%) for adopting fisheries as a profession, whereas non excess to extension services (27.5%) stands 2nd and lack of collateral to obtain bank loans/subsidies (32.5%) stands 3rd in order.

Discussions: On the basis of findings of observations, compared to vast water bodies and scope of agriculture in the district, the participation of women is at very low ebb because of the following reasons: i. Gender biased extension services are there. ii. Our Women, because of social taboo is not coming up. iii. No specific schemes/incentives for rural women for fishery related activities. iv. No availability of adequate extension and training services for women folk. v. Women have no awareness about the fisheries as economic activity.

Conclusion

There is utmost need to educate women folk and to motivate them into fisheries sector with respect to adoption of their profession because education is the only tool by which social setup can be changed. i. Fisheries deptt. should organize a number of awareness programmes continuously at the door steps of the women so that they can understand that, the rearing of fishes is more profitable as compare to traditional crops s/as Paddy, wheat, rice etc. ii. The fishery Department should also appoint women fisheries officials so that they can educate the rural women on their issue. iii. Women fisheries 'self help groups' be formed for the development of fisheries in rural areas. iv. Fisheries deptt. should co-ordinate with the financial institutions like banks for the formation of micro schemes of

fisheries for rural women without any collateral. It will go a long way in motivating the rural women to avail the credit for fisheries. v. Training and extension programmes should be exclusively for rural women at their door steps/ centre of the village as they may afraid travelling up to the fisheries research centre. Instead of calling the rural women at the centre, department should go to their places near to their village preferably in the local Panchayat Ghars. vi. There is an immediate need to recognize to role of women in fisheries sectors by showing them the role directly/indirectly played by the women folk.

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