

Role played and constraints faced by fisher women in inland fish marketing in Anand district, Gujarat, India

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ABSTRACT

Anand district in Gujarat stands first in inland fish production through ponds and tanks and around four thousands of fisher women were depending on fishery activities for their livelihood sustenance. Looking into their role, two major objectivities were put forth by the researcher; that is, to understand different roles played by fisherwomen in comparision to their male counterparts and to understand different constraints faced by them during marketing of the fish. Fifty female retailers were selected purposively from different market yards of the district and responses had been captured through a pretested structured schedule. During analysis, it was found that fisher women were mainly doing segregation, cleaning and collection of cash after selling of the produce solely whereas selling of fish had been handled by both male and female fisherman of the district. During selling of fresh fish female retailers were facing much real cost and increase infrastructural set up may enhance their retaining and bargaining power. Female retailers may be empowered by proving training in their respective activities areas.

Keywords: Female activities identified, fish marketing, real cost involved in fish marketing

Gujarat is bestowed with ample water resources of 3865km of rivers and canals, 2.43 lakh hectares of reservoirs, 0.71 lakh hectares of tanks, lakes and ponds, 0.12 lakh hectares of flood plain lakes and derelict water, 1 lakh hectares of brackish water (Central Water Commission, Government of India, ON153) and it ranks third in fishery production next to Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal and produces total of 788.49 thousand tonnes of fishery which is 11.46 per cent of India's total fish production (Handbook of Fishery Statistics, 2014). It produces only 94.93 thousand tonnes of Inland fishery which is one eighth of its total fish production (Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries, MOA, GOI, ON472). Even though the share of inland fish is very less still 4.9 lakh fisher men (approximately) depend on fishery activities for their livelihood and self-sustenance out of which women accounts for 48.32 per cent (Gujarat Fishery Statistics 2010-11). Anand district is a major hub for Inland fish production in Gujarat. Its contribution in the state is around 35.39 per cent (2308 metric tonnes) through ponds and tanks (Gujarat Fishery Statistics 2010-11). According to NSSO (2007-08) almost 99.99 per cent labour input is in agriculture and forestry and 98.7 per cent is in fishing in unorganised sector. Out of 400 million working force in unorganised sector in India, 120 million are women. In Gujarat itself 48.32 per cent of women depend on fishery out of total Fishermen population and Total fisher women in Anand district is 4095 (Gujarat Fisheries Statistics, 2010-11). Fish is a perishable commodity and its quick disposal is necessary to maintain its nutritional value and overall palatability. Market price of fish is determined by freshness, species and availability of fish in the market (Salim, 2008).The major problems in marketing include high perishability

and bulkiness of the fish, high cost of storage and transportation, no guarantee of quality and quantity of commodity and high price spread (Ravindranath,2008). In this juncture the livelihood of fisher women have been integrating and they have been playing a very crucial role in Inland fish marketing. The marketing practice of both marine and fresh water fish is of different characteristics. The marine fish marketing is a broad practice where selling is normally in bulk and distribution channel is longer than that of inland fish (Phukan& Barman, 2013). It infers from the above statement that in Inland fish marketing as internal demand is increasing day by day, distribution channel may be shorter and may be consumed in raw form.

Looking into the overall scenario of Inland fish production and its probable marketing pattern, two objectives have been established by the researchers to understand different roles played by fisherwomen in comparision to their male counterparts and to understand different constraints faced by them during marketing of the fish.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Fifty female retailers had been selected from different areas of Anand district by considering their prevalence in market yard through purposive sampling. Data had been collected through a pre-structured schedule and observation method of data collection had also taken into consideration when it was very difficult to handling the response from the respondents. All the data has been analysed through weighted average mean for understanding any constraints faced by them and a comparative analysis chart has been prepared after pilot study to understand different role played by fisher

Role played and constraints faced by fisher women

women in comparison to their counter parts. Five varieties of inland fish like Rohu, Catla, Nagri, Surimai and Bighead were identified through judgmental sampling and female fisherwomen were selected during the sailing of the particular varieties. During this study, the female retailers were asked seventy six affirmative statements and problems were identified after the analysis through weighted average mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

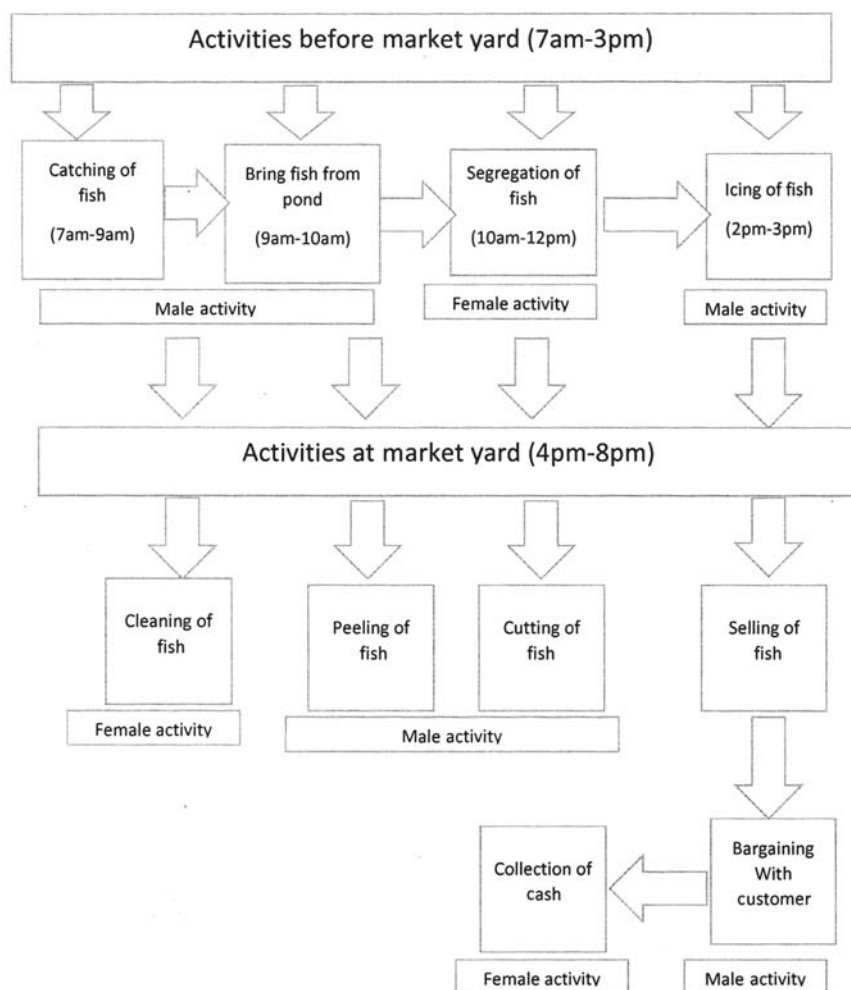
Role played by fisher women in comparison to their counterparts

Ten activities had been identified in pilot study during marketing of fish. Out of different activities segregation of fish, cleaning of fish and collection of cash after selling of fish were handling exclusively by fisher women whereas selling of fish were handled by both of them. In comparison to their male counterpart, the female activities were manual and unskilled in all sense. The collection of cash after selling of fish may establish their role in family decision making and throw some light on money related management in their life.

Network analysis in overall

Activities	Performed	Performed by
Catching of fish	√	
Bringing fish from	√	
Segregation of fish		√
Icing of fish	√	
Selling of fish	√	√
Cutting of fish	√	
Cleaning of fish		√
Peeling of fish	√	
Bargaining with	√	
Collection of cash after selling of fish		√

Actually the real activities for marketing of fish have been started quite before the product comes to the market yard. The male counterparts were going for collection of fish either catching from the nearby pond or collecting fish directly from nearby district (Nadiad) and were bringing it to the home premises. After that they were going for work in nearby areas. The female were segregating the fish along



with home activities like cooking, cleaning etc. Again the male member was coming and icing the fish. It may require little bit skill as proper icing enhances the self-life of the products. In the evening in between 4 to 8 pm the marketing of fish had been taken place in the market yard.

Constraints faced by fisherwomen:

Constraints identified	Weighted mean score	Rank assigned
Fresh Fish Costs More for them	4.87	1
You travel other taluka/district for fish collection	4.80	2
Profit is less in working days	4.60	3
More retailer in winter than summer season	4.47	4
Customer do argument for discount	4.40	5

In the study area, fish collection and fish catching was the sole activities of fishermen and female was depending on them for fulfilling demand of the customer. Again from collection of fish to its marketing; a large number of activities were undertaken and each activities added costs for further movement of the produce. At the same time; when female due to her submissive attitudes could not sell them to pickier customer at right price. Customers were doing bargaining and female retailer lost some percentage over the final price instead of any premium for the good products. Rather its impact was also observed for other fishes in the bulk and their prices was also went down automatically in presence of some fresh fishes in the lot. That's why fresh fish costs more for the female retailers not only in costs that had been incurred for buying and selling process but also due to increase of some real costs had be arisen in the marketing process.

As the collection of fish was the activities of male counterparts; at the time of high demand female retailers have gone to other taluka/district for fish collection. It is mainly observed in between mid- May to first half of August; when internal demand goes high due to government ban for catching of marine fish in this particular state. Again inland fishes are captured more before monsoon for mitigating any loss due to water over flows from the ponds and tanks. In this time female retailers may go to collection of fish for handling spike in demand and rationing of supply in the district.

Female retailers were very less retaining power and handed maximum up to 25kg of fishes within one to two days that was only observed when the fish retailing was the family business. Otherwise female retailers could manage only up to 5 kg of fish at a time in a day. In the particular district demand of the fish was fluctuating working day to holiday. When demand of the product was going high in holiday, female retailer could not satisfy the customer. That's why, no doubt profit was more in holidays; its pie was not going to the female retailers' pocket. During

winter more retailers were coming to the market assuming more internal demand due to advent of cold. But this was not so apparent; as culture of this particular state prefer vegetarian diet to non-vegetarian one. No doubt demand was increased at some parts of Anand district, where cosmopolitan cultural set up was observing particular in station bazar market in Anandtaluka but other areas of the district increased in retailers were reducing dividend from the profit. Customers of the particular district were doing bargaining at the end of the selling of the product; its impact was more precarious among female retailers than male one. Basically at many chunk of the market yard where marketing of fish was the family activities, male fishermen were doing counter bargaining with the customer instead of female one. In Anand district, submissive and over dependence culture particularly in fishery business and poor retaining power due to lack of infrastructure may be created an extra edge among customers over female retailers and its impact may have observed during bargaining of the product. Fisherwomen are doing all types of manual and unskilled activities during marketing of the produce. As fish is a perishable products and easy and quick disposal is necessary so fisher women as retailers are confronting many huddles and real and implicit costs increased more than explicit during marketing of the fish.

Recommendation

Female retailers may be empowered in their respective activities that has been carried out exclusively by themselves during fish marketing. Infrastructural bottleneck may be sorted out to enhance retaining power of the product among the fisherwomen.

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