



Socio- Economic Resilience of Fisher Women Through Dry Fish Trade

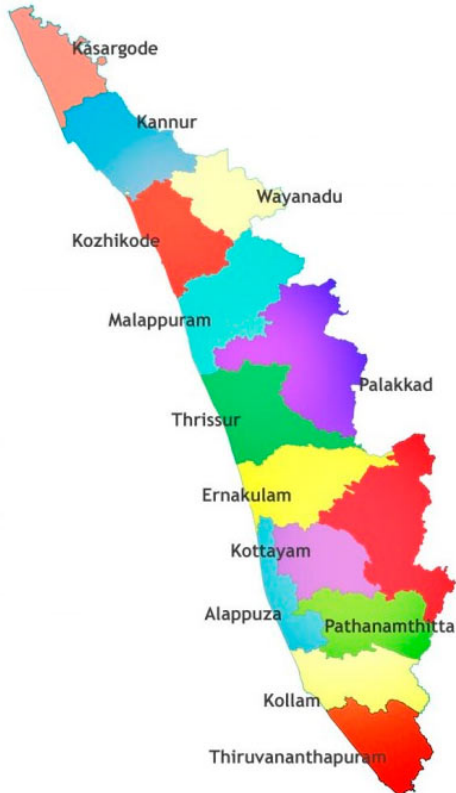
-A Case Study from Puduveypu

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Kerala - Demographic details



Southern most State of India
Occupies 2.76% of India's total
population

Total population - 34,334,885

Males - 16,021,290

Females- 17,366,387

Development status of the State



Highest literacy rate in India

Highly skilled human resources with low operating cost.

Human Development Index at par with the West.

Ranked best in India in terms of Physical Quality of life Index.

An efficient public transport system.

Information Technology becoming a key area of economic excellence.

Best Public Health care system in India.

Social status of women



Kerala has carved out a separate niche for itself within the country.

Leading State in terms of social development

56% of the population consist of women

It has a favorable sex ratio of 1084 females per 1000 males.

(Rural- 1077 Urban – 1091)

Female literacy rate in rural area is 92.92% and 94.99% in urban.



Educational level of women



School education - 49.43%

Higher secondary – 52.73%

Graduation- 68.6%

P.G- 75.54%



Health Status of Women in Kerala



Death rate of female – 6
Infant mortality of female- 13
Mean age at effective marriage
of women - 22
Expectancy of life at birth- 76.9

Women in employment



Women are vital and productive agents in Indian economy. But these efforts and pain of her is still under 'Statistical Purdha' (World Bank, 1991) due to the patriarchal norms.

Condition is not much better even in Kerala

Majority of the women are engaged in skilled or semi-skilled vocations and also the level of education is higher than men.

But most of their work are not reported under the influence of the same patriarchal conceptions of economic activity.



Sector wise distribution of employment



Agriculture- 31.9%

Industry- 30.4%

Service 37.7%

Female labor participation – 35.4% and it is 82.4% in case of men

Women self employed workers

Rural- 36.4

Urban – 36.3



Average daily wages in agricultural works



Weeding and sowing: 638.29 for Males
and 446.88 for females.

Harvesting and other workers: 582.14 for
male and 439.1 for female.



Fishermen community in Kerala



Fishermen population of Kerala is estimated as 10.24 lakhs (2015-16)
7.88 lakh in marine and 2.36 lakhs in inland
Marine villages is 222
Inland is 113
Marine production is 71% and inland is 29%.

Social status of fishermen



The majority of the fishermen families are nuclear and had on an average five members.

80% of the families depend fishing for their income.

Nearly half of these are economically vulnerable with lack of assets for independent fishing.

Most of the men work as coolie fishermen.



Women in fisheries



Fishing has been understood to be predominantly men's work, but it is a fact that women play critical roles in the fisheries sector, particularly in the postharvest level

In India, about 25% of women labor force is involved in pre-harvest activities, 35% in export marketing and 40% in internal marketing.

The fisher women in Kerala also play an important role in the sector.

Major activities are fish vending, fish drying, prawn peeling, sorting, grading, fish packing and net making.



Women in fisheries



Majority of women are engaged in fish marketing.
Generally women works between 7 and 10 hours a day and 5 to 7 days a week.
Besides the family's catch, the women procured fish from group purchase and auction.
Fish was marketed mainly through head load



A close-up photograph of a large pile of dried fish, likely anchovies, showing their characteristic yellowish-brown color and elongated shape. The fish are piled together, creating a textured background. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "DRY FISH INDUSTRY" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

DRY FISH INDUSTRY

Dry fish industry



Drying method is considered as the least expensive method of fish preservation.

Sun drying of fishes is a simple and the oldest traditional method of fish preservation throughout the Indian subcontinent.

Indian dry fish export contributes 7.86% of all form of fish exports.

Kerala dry fish industry mainly depend upon internal markets.

Dry fish industry



There are 7 major markets in Kerala.

Aluva and Ernakulum are the markets in Ernakulum Dt.

In Aluva, majority of the stocks comes from outside of the State.

Marketing of dry fish involves a series of interactions between fishermen, processors, wholesalers, transporters, and retailers.

The nutritional quality of dried fish remains intact, sometimes retains higher quality standards compared to fresh fish

Dry fish industry of Vypin



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Vypin Island is one of the fastest growing urban agglomerations of Kochi.

Pudupveypu is the part of Vypin Island and an emerging industrial area.

It borders Vembanad Lake to the east, Arabian Sea to the west and South and Njarakkal to the North.



Dry fish sector- early struggles



Dry fish processing and marketing was one of the major backyard industries of Vypin since long back.

About fifteen fish drying yards and stocking sheds were located adjacent to each other.

A steady decline in the fish yield and consequent hike in the price left this business unaffordable and many quit the field.

Apart from other places women were the major stakeholders of this sector in Puduveyypu.

In early days they were used to buy fish from Azheekkal harbour as there was no harbour at Vypin.

Dry fish sector- early struggles



They struggled very much in means of transportation as there were no proper road transportation facilities available.

They used small boats for the transportation in early days.

It was hard to reach at Ernakulum market as there were no road connectivity to the mainland.

Lack of initial investment was another obstacle.

They used to rely on money lenders which were always ended up in high debt.



Dry fish sector- early struggles



They used their own house premises for drying.

The selling price of dried fish was lowest among the industry.



Why they continued in the sector?

According to them, fish drying was the only livelihood skill they are good in, as most of them were illiterate.

Current status



The current status shows there are some groups of women still active in the dry fish processing and marketing sector for more than 40 years.

They are successfully running this industry and attained socio-economic resilience.



Major species used are mackerel, ribbonfish, shark, sardines, anchovies, silver belly, malabar sole etc.

They specialized in mackerel processing

Current status



All of the women are belonging to fishermen community.

All of them are from economically vulnerable background and are the only earning member of the family.

Individuals and groups of women are also present in this business.

This sector helped many to grow into the level of entrepreneurship.

Recent developments



The availability of the raw materials became much easier because of the Vypin harbour and current developments happened in recent past.

The construction of Goshree bridges and renovation of RMP Canal made their struggle much easier.

Apart from traditional fish species, demand for forage fishes also increased due to emerging aquaculture industry.

Recent developments



They are targeting the internal market all over Kerala.

Peak seasons are August to June and January to April.

They are sell the product at Ernakulum market in all Mondays and Fridays of every week by means of auction.

Each can earn a monthly revenue more than 10,000, which is comparatively a high income for women in this sector.



DRY FISH PROCESS















Social and economic resilience



Power to deal with:

Family health issues

Children's education

Purchasing assets for home

Power to buying gifts for social functions

Giving loan to others





Power to take decisions on :

Family matters

Spending money for their relatives.

Marriage decisions

Decisions in family planning

Choice of guest and entertainment at social functions etc.



Gender inequalities in the sector



It is a fact that the fish markets are traditionally dominated by males. Women are the weak sector who have a very poor stake in decision making. Generally, women are lacking equal participation in auctions .

Difficulties facing



Difficulty in getting credit

Difficulty in handling the bulk quantities of fish & fishery products.

Inability to exercise tie up with sales.

Difficulty in storage of the products.

Hurdles in transportation of the products.

Purchasing prices of fish and fish products from the auction site / market.

Why need protection against livelihood threats.



Marketing situations and demand is changing rapidly.

Increasing inequalities within fisheries and marketing chains (eg: low value for work done, limited access to essential resources, new technology, education and skills).

The domestic responsibilities is limiting women's roles in every sector as they are forcing to play two dimensional roles.



Need interventions



In most cases women's physical movement is subject to social control. So need a social protection strategy which can directly support women's entry into new markets and profitable enterprises.

Protecting the independent rights to resources may help them to cope with the change.



Why it is important



Participation of women in economic activities is essential for the prosperity of households as well as for the economy of the country.

Their economic power is considered as the most important factor affecting gender relations at the household level.



A photograph of two women in a rural setting, likely a beach or a field. They are carrying large, heavy metal pots on their heads, which are filled with straw or hay. The woman on the left is wearing a blue shirt and a pink shawl, and the woman on the right is wearing a yellow shirt and a pink shawl. In the background, other people and a bird are visible on the ground.

So.....

“Women should not be seen as passive recipients of public support, but as dynamic promoters of social transformation which have a powerful influence to control their own environment as well as to contribute towards economic development”

Amartya Sen

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A faded background image of a beach scene. In the foreground, two women are walking towards the camera. The woman on the left is smiling and wearing a blue shirt and a pink shawl. She is carrying a large, round, silver metal pot on her head, which is overflowing with dry grass or straw. The woman on the right is wearing a yellow shirt and a pink shawl, also carrying a similar large metal pot on her head, also overflowing with dry grass. In the background, other people are visible on the sandy beach, some sitting and some standing. The sky is bright and hazy. The text "THANK YOU" is overlaid in the center of the image, flanked by two horizontal lines.

THANK YOU