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Ornamental Fish Culture &Women Entrepreneurship: with Special reference to Andhra Pradesh

T Anita Susan Reader in Zoology, Andhra Christian College, Guntur-522001

ABSTRACT

Andhra Pradesh ranks first in aquaculture production, however ornamental fishery is still in infancy. It can be a promising alternative for many women entrepreneurs by providing livelihood in the newly formed state of Andhra Pradesh. To ensure that women utilize their full potential it is necessary to provide capacity building and support which will lead to their empowerment. Backyard ornamental fishery provides a lot of scope for improving their income. More opportunities must be created for women in this area through collection and dissemination of information and transfer of technology from various states.

KEYWORDS : Livelihood, empowerment, ornamental fishery,.

Aquarium keeping is among worlds most popular hobbies, with millions of enthusiasts across the globe. These 'living jewels' are characterized by diversity of colour patterns, habits behavior morphology and mode of food taking Chakravarthi, and Sharma (2012).

The trade with a turnover of US$5 Billion an annual growth rate of 8 per cent offers a lot of scope for development. Top exporting country is Singapore followed by Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Indonesia and India. Largest importer is USA, Europe and Japan. Emerging markets are China and South Africa. Ornamental fish culture export is one of the recent areas in aquaculture diversification.

In India there are 400 species of ornamental species belonging to 175 genera and 50 families Sateesh JM (2002). Indian ornamental fish trade is mostly with fresh water fish, of which 98 per cent are cultured and 2 per cent are captured from wild Mahapatra (2006). With tropical climate western Ghats and north eastern Ghats, hot spots of biodiversity are important areas identified for fish breeding and culture (Mercy et al.,2003). Ornamental fisheries provide not only aesthetic requirement and sustainability of environment but also generate income and provides livelihood. In the newly formed state of Andhra Pradesh with right policy initiatives from the State Government can tremendously contribute livelihood security of rural women augment national income in a more socially equitable way.

India's share in ornamental fish trade is 0.008 percent of global trade. Major part of export trade is based on wild collection from north eastern states. This capture based export is not sustainable and is a matter of concern. Hence focus should be on culture based system. There is very good domestic market based on domestic breed exotic species. The overall domestic trade in this field crosses Rs.10 crores and is growing at the rate of 20 per cent annually. The earning potential of this sector has hardly been understood and is under exploited. Considering relatively simple techniques involved, this activity has potential to create substantial employment opportunities in rural areas for women, besides generating additional income with minimal risk and consuming less time. With the inception of national agriculture innovation projects (NAIP) in Chitradurga of Karnataka ornamental fish culture was introduced with initial investment from the project by constructing cement tanks and by introducing suitable varieties of ornamental fish (Molly, Guppy, Swordtail). Farm women were trained and exposure visits were arranged to establish fisheries units around Bangalore. Formation of ornamental fish grower associations secured good prices. Fish were directly sold to aquarium shops are to Karnataka fisheries Development Corporation. Gross return per annum is Rs.25,000 with an expenditure of Rs.10,000.

Kolathur in north Chennai has become the hub for ornamental fish trading in the country, not because of any special policy of state government, but because of efforts' of individual entrepreneurships. Few enterprising people started to breed the fish in the back yards of their homes. This was started as cottage industry by several people, which was later shifted to Gummadipoondi. At present there are 80 shops dealing in ornamental fishes, aquarium accessories, etc. they sell around 600 varieties of fish (The Hindu 14-11-2013). Women are collectively engaged in ornamental fish culture at Sakkmalpuram. They could earn Rs.5000 to Rs.7000 every month. It has improved the living standards of rural women (The Hindu 14-11-2013).

West Bengal a pioneering state in ornamental fish farming, where rural women form self help groups in 24 paraganas and suburbs of Kolkata. They take up this activity in the backyard of their homes. They keep the breeding gold fish in small earthen pots and feed them with small pieces of roti. Similarly in Kerala it is taken up a livelihood activity. The state governments are providing the entrepreneurs with technical knowledge through workshops and also providing them with financial assistance. As a part of poverty alleviation activities, government of India launched SwarnaJayanthi Gram SwrojgarYojana (SGSY) in 1999 where the emphasis is on self help group(SHG) formation social mobilization and economic activation through micro credit finance. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) takes up activities for economic empowerment of rural poor. The primary focus of self help groups is to provide emotional and practical support with exchange of information. Now ornamental fish farming, fish culture, fish seed production is included as different activities of self help groups (Basudevmandal et al., 2001.)

With the above information this kind of ornamental projects can be taken up for women in the rural areas of in the newly formed state of Andhra Pradesh. With technical support from state institute of Fisheries Technology, Kakinada and also with right initiative from National Fishery Development Board (NFDB) .

In fresh and brackish water aqua culture women in Tamil Nadu are engaged in Carp breeding, Carp poly culture, breeding of cat fish and fresh water prawns in backyard hatcheries. Ornamental fish breeding and culture, culture of spiriluna and azolla feed preparation for carps and prawn. Women earn a significant supplementary income from these activities and increase the family income considerably. (Shaleesha& Stanley 2000).

Andhra Pradesh ranks first in aquaculture production in India, with a coast line of 980 km, two large estuarine systems at the mouth of rivers Godavari and Krishna, backwater areas near Kakinada, rocky patches around Visakhapatnam and many aqua ponds in Guntur and Krishna districts. A survey of AP coast has to be conducted to assess the availability, abundance and diversity of species of ornamental fish which will aid in planning, breeding and culture programmes. This culture and trade can be also attempted during slack period of shrimp seed production or carp seed production. Drawback is availability of breeding and hatching technology for species with high economic value.

The ornamental fish trade is small scale limited to fresh water fishes, no marine species is being exported from India. There is a vast potential to increase the level of exports to Rs.110 crores per year from present Rs.10 crores per year.

The state government should take a policy decision to set up self help group as a major poverty alleviation initiative with a view to ensure a robust economic growth that would be labor intensive and equitable

specially directed towards BPL (below poverty line groups). Various programmes administered by different departments of Central and State governments, SHG bank linkage programme initiated by NABARD active participation of NGOs play a very important role which will help the rural women in capacity building and to enable them to evolve into self managed organization. Therefore there is an urgent need for up scaling the operations in this area keeping in view the mammoth requirements in the country.

More opportunities must be created for women, predominantly through collection and dissemination of information and transfer of technology between different states of our country and between countries. Ornamental fish farming can be a promising alternative for many people. It requires very little space and less initial investment than most forms of aquaculture. In the initial stages it does not require sophisticated equipment only a clear understanding of the habits and biology of fishes is required. It can be practiced even in urban areas with little alteration of backyard or even a roof of a dwelling. It requires less manpower hence women or elderly people can run the home units. With slightly more sophisticated equipment such as heaters aerators and power filters practices like selective breeding, stock manipulation and proper feeding these units can be maintained in urban areas also. Gosh (2003).

CIFA is conducting training programmes with participants from state fisheries department MPEDA, Central Institutes, Bank officials, Teachers of Universities, Researchers, KVK, NGOs, and Private Entrepreneurs.

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