



Impact of Globalization and New Media among the Fishing Communities: a Case-Study of Puducherry Coastal Villages

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globalization, media communication, livelihood option, welfare programmes

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ABSTRACT *This article seeks to define and explicate the impact of globalization and new media among the fishing communities of Puducherry coastal villages. Due to increasing globalization the fishing market has undergone substantial change at a very fast pace in the last two decades. Globalization, combined with new media revolution in fishing industry has created challenges effectively. Media communication helps in development of the fishing community at large, and provides consumers with better quality of seafood. The study spells out how the globalization processes have affected the poorest fishing women in reducing their livelihood options on the one hand and their access to welfare programmes on the other hand. In this way the fishing sector that is becoming more 'marketised' could potentially affect their livelihood adversely. Globalization and media can effect a change in the lives of fishing communities if the process is carefully taken care.*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is defined by an intensification of global social interrelations by which distant localities are connected to one another in such a manner that events taking place at one locality affect those that happen many kilometres away. In this sense, globalization is the growing interdependence between markets and in fisheries this happens principally through three channels that is trade in fish and fish products, foreign direct investments in harvesting and processing and through fisheries services that include both harvesting, processing and fisheries management services. This paper provides an overview of the trade and market situation in fisheries in the coastal areas of Puducherry as it has developed over the past decades also discuss the potential opportunities and challenges that are caused by the media in the process of globalization in the coastal villages of Puducherry.

Objectives of the Study

The field study had two objectives: one, to determine the impact of globalization in the fishing industry and to assess the impact of changes in the livelihoods of the people. The second objective is to appraise how the new communication technology in the era of globalization has affected the lives of the fishing community.

Globalization can be defined as the integration of world economies by removing barriers to trade and encouraging the free flow of foreign investment, private portfolio capital and labour across national boundaries. Globalization is achieved by removing barriers to the free flow of goods and money anywhere in the world, which in turn fosters competition, creates jobs, increases economic efficiencies, lowers consumer prices, increases consumer's choice and is generally beneficial to everyone by increasing overall economic growth.

Globalization and New Media in Fishing Industry

Globalization is not new to fishing industry. In fact the process of globalizations that is the increasing interdependence of markets and fisheries has been occurring for decades if not centuries. Though a flow of fish from regions of capture to sites of consumption is historical, the market has undergone substantial change at a very fast pace in the last two decades. "This is caused by numerous factors including the growing importance of the globalization, cheaper and faster modes of transport, improved marketing, lower market access barriers, more competition, constantly increasing consumer demand for fish and fish products as well as technological developments"¹²

Background and Context of the Study

The total marine fishing population of Puducherry numbers about 6, 79,711 people, who primarily fish in the continental shelf area. The total marine fisher folk population forms about one per cent of the total state population. The percentage of poor people in the coastal land according to National Institute for Rural Development (NIRD) (2000) was 40 per cent in northern zone, 1.3 per cent in central zone and 31 per cent in southern zone, respectively (Fisheries Statistics of Tamil Nadu, India, 2004.³⁴

The Union Territory of Puducherry, with a coastline of approximately 50 km with 24 fishing villages, falls in the Coromandel coast, and shares all the features of the fishing system and practices as the neighbouring parts of Tamil Nadu.

Issues in Globalization of Fishing Industry:

1. Economic Policies of Globalization

Export of seafood has always been a priority area for the Government of India. In the era of globalization and liberalization of marketing system, many programmes have been put in place: 1) to increase production of export varieties; and 2) to facilitate exports. Towards this end the governments of Puducherry and Tamil Nadu have promoted the improvement of fishing crafts and gear, deep-sea fishing, aquaculture and infrastructure development. The value-addition to the catches as a result of these measures has been very high and provides opportunities for many fishers and entrepreneurs but displaced many fisher women. Whilst several positive outcomes have been observed in many fishing villages as a direct result of the economic liberalization and globalization processes, it was also noticed that the rich-poor divide in many cases is widening, and that the benefits of the changed economic scenario may heavily in favour of those people with power, knowledge, ability to adopt and finances. The present study found that the globalization and liberalization processes have affected the poorer fishing women in reducing their livelihood options on the one hand and their access to welfare programmes, such as subsidized food through public distribution systems, on the other.

2. Market Linkage in Fish Trade: Auctioneers

Middlemen or auctioneers are a common factor in the fishing industry. The auctioneer was paid a certain amount for the job, as he had to forgo fishing that day. From every catch that is sold at the auction a fixed percentage was given to the village, except when the catch was worth less than a certain amount. The lease amount, which ultimately goes to the village fund, ranges from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 5000 per month, depending other seasons.⁵ However, the field research has indi-

cated that the auctioning system had undergone a change in the meantime, and that auction was nowadays done by professional auctioneers who make use of the modern mobile phones and control the market. These men are paid fixed salary by the fishers themselves. The practice of the village claiming a part of the proceeds for community purpose too was seen to be rapidly fading in most areas. In recent times, with the globalization the traditional practices and community based values among the fishing community are disappearing due to involvement of new entrants in their field backed by political and power groups.

3. Technology and Global Communication - Related process

It is a known factor that the fishery has undergone rapid changes in the last few years. Boat building, propulsion systems (small power to motorization), fishing gears (organic fibers to synthetic gears; manual net making to factory-made); specialization of fishing systems (multi-gear to species specific gear); fishing distances and duration; onboard and on shore preservation and processing systems have all undergone many changes. While this has helped things as a macro level, technology has had a drastic impact on poorer people.⁶

The present study indicated that, in different parts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, dry fish processing activity is less now than 10 years ago, and women attributed this decline to the dwindling catches of specific varieties of fish used in processing and also the use of modern communication system. It is estimated that the dry fish trade constituted only about 10-15 per cent of the total fish trade as against a much higher percentage in the past. The processors consequently have to travel longer distance for procuring the new material. The supply of by-catch from the mechanized sector increased substantially over the period even though its value is relatively less. The by-catch is mostly purchased through advance transaction done through mobile phones, possibly by fishmeal manufactures, and consequently its availability to small-scale processors is limited.

Data Analysis

According to table 1, The maximum of 70 per cent respondents answer that they use mobile phone/wireless all the 7 days in a week. About 60 per cent people use TV all the 7 days. 48.8 per cent people say they use GPS/Navigator all the 7 days. Despite radio was used by 28.8 per cent of the people.

The table 2, shows that 64.4 percentage of the people use radio to know the weather forecasting while fishing. Another 70 per cent use mobile phones to get in touch with others. As most people use mobile and wireless on both onshore and offshore they found it easy to contact their home people even while fishing far away in the sea. It has become very useful for assessing the market situation.

The mobile telephone appears to be global artifact, attracting attention from technologists and policy-makers, as well as consumers. In fishing industry, mobile telephone demand is growing rapidly, and its usage increases.⁷⁷¹⁸ In Puducherry coastal areas fishermen use mobile telephones to compare the prices they might receive for their catch at different ports. In this study we have observed that the multiple dimensions of social influence stem not just from the technological developments of smaller batteries and compatible standards, but

from the ways in which they become integrated into social changes which are already under way and are supported by the new kinds of communicative forms which the mobile telephone permits.

Conclusion

Globalization, combined with new media revolution in fishing industry has created challenges effectively. However, this very philosophy of globalization and new media environment has provided opportunities allowing the industry to grow fast. We argued that globalization also means the intensification of modern media of communication including mobile phones and internet. In the context of field study done in the coastal areas of Puducherry we have suggested that the process of effective and modern communication, the processes of creativity and the changes these areas are now experiencing owing to the impact of globalization and new media. Technological changes in fisheries, entry of outside capital and growth in trade and markets have transformed the fisheries sector. These developments have increased pressure on fisheries resources. Process of economic globalization, privatization and the concentration of ownership and control of fisheries, have affected often in very negative ways, the lives of fishers and their families. This research is also a warning to policy makers that globalization is harming poor fishing communities. These communities already have a smaller share of the market because of new regulations. Poor fishers must either be helped to find other ways of making a living or helped to adjust to the new standards. Definitely globalization and new media can effect a change in the lives of fishing community if properly implemented.

Table: 1 One week frequently used media

Media	1day	2days	3days	4days	5days	6days	7days	No use
Radio	6.4	9.2	8	17.2	10	2.4	28.8	18
Television	0	9.2	1.2	4.0	10	4.4	59.6	59.6
DVD,VCD	1.2	12.4	12.8	18.4	13.2	4	14	24
Mobile phone / wireless	0	3.6	0.4	0	0.8	2.4	70	22.8
GPS/Navigator	4.8	2.0	0	3.6	1.6	10	48.8	29.2
Eco system	6.0	2.0	4.0	1.2	9.6	4.0	26.8	46.4
Newspaper	1.6	6.8	15.2	12.8	6.4	0	25.6	31.6

Table: 2 Reasons of Using Media

Reasons	Radio	TV	Mobile phone Wireless	Computer	GPS/ navigator	Eco system
Weather forecasting	64.4	24.4	11.2	0	0	0
Market situation	20.8	59.6	13.2	6.4	0	0
listen to general programme	15.2	69.2	14.4	1.2	0	0
To get in touch with others	10.0	15.6	70	4.4	0	0
For entertainment	8.8	42.4	17.2	29.2	1.2	1.2
For fishing	0	11.2	.8	5.2	82.8	0

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