



EMPOWERMENT OF FISHER-FOLK IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is to study the socio-cultural empowerment of fisher-folk and the economic empowerment of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district. Primary data has been used in this paper. Primary data were collected on the basis of questionnaire prepared on the light of the objectives of the study. The sizes of the samples are 150 fisher-folk. These sample respondents were selected by taking 30 from five villages of the study area. These samples were selected purposively. The questionnaire was designed with two main characteristics viz., open ended and close ended according to the nature of information. Collected data were analyzed through the use of various statistical tools like ANOVA. The data were analyzed in order to make the study more informative and useful to the readers. It is found that the important socio-cultural empowerment among the fisher-folk are in the age group of 20 to 30 years are attending cultural programmes and exercising the voting rights. Among the fisher-folk are in the age group of above 50 years, the important socio-cultural empowerment are extending the support for social causes and participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities. Age wise there is a significant difference in the socio-cultural empowerment are identified in the case of participation in social programmes, attending social functions, exercising the voting rights and attending cultural programmes.

KEYWORDS : Socio-cultural empowerment, Fisher-folk, Economic Empowerment and Political Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Fisheries has a pivotal role to play in socio economic development of our country as it helps in increasing food supply, generate job opportunities, raising nutritional level, earning foreign exchange etc. Empowerment is a process, which enables individuals or groups to change balance of power through exchange of experience, expertise, technology and know-how as well as diffusing innovative technique for strengthening the self-reliance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Fisher-folk continued to suffer from poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. But, it appears that coastal fishing communities are considered to suffer from lack of access to fair credit sources. Some of the poorest people in Kanyakumari district live in coastal fishing communities, which are culturally and economically marginalized and have often little or no voice in local government bodies. Institutional and financial access is further constrained as poor fisher-folk require larger loans (i. e. for the purchase of boats or fishing gear) and are considered a high risk by lending institutions, including Government, banks, and NGOs. As a consequence, they are more likely to depend on informal possibly exploitative credit sources, whereby fish-buyers also act as money lenders.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-cultural empowerment of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district
- To know the economic empowerment of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district

METHODOLOGY

Primary data has been used in this paper. Primary data were collected on the basis of questionnaire prepared on the light of the objectives of the study. The sizes of the samples are 150 fisher-folk. These sample respondents were selected by taking 30 from five villages of the study area. These samples were selected purposively. The samples are chosen to be typically representative of the population in terms of the characteristics of the study. Before finalization of the questionnaire a pilot survey was conducted for the study purpose. The questionnaire was designed with two main characteristics viz., open ended and close ended according to the nature of information. For instance, questions regarding procedures and method of different aspects of credit issues were close ended based on literature survey and pilot survey. This was done to facilitate data analysis work. Some other questions were kept open ended where opinion was sought and the respondents have something to tell from their experiences. This was done to give scope to the respondents to express themselves freely. From May 2022, the data entry work started and in the month of July, 2022, the collected data were compiled, tabulated and checked for internal consistency. Thereafter, editing and coding were made as per research objectives.

Collected data were analyzed through the use of various statistical tools like ANOVA. The data were analyzed in order to make the study more informative and useful to the readers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different Age group of Fisher-folk**

In order to find out the significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different age group of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different age group of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district". The result of 'ANOVA' test is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Socio-cultural Empowerment Among Different Age Group Of Fisher-folk

Socio-Cultural Empowerment	Age Group (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	Above 50 years	
Participation in social programmes	3.3019	3.7508	3.7149	3.7391	2.720*
Member in social organisation	3.0189	3.0699	3.0317	3.1014	0.121
Interaction with the society	3.0943	3.2614	3.4570	3.0942	2.492
Awareness on fundamental rights	4.0189	3.5380	3.5928	3.6739	2.606
Participation in the meeting of local bodies	3.9623	3.7052	3.5747	3.5217	2.306
Participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities	3.8491	3.7538	3.5611	3.7609	1.486
Attending social functions	3.7547	3.5775	3.4706	3.3043	2.858*
Exercising the voting rights	4.1887	3.9119	3.8733	3.5507	3.934*
Attending cultural programmes	4.2830	3.9635	3.8778	3.5580	5.546*
Encouraging the promotion of culture	3.6604	3.6079	3.6109	3.5362	0.208
Organising local festivals	2.9245	3.3222	3.2851	3.3623	2.933*

Political empowerment	3.3774	3.5532	3.6742	3.6087	1.135
Extending the support for social causes	3.8491	3.9726	4.1584	3.9565	1.618

Source: Primary Data

*-Significant at five per cent level

Table 1 shows that the important socio-cultural empowerment among the fisher-folk are in the age group of 20 to 30 years are attending cultural programmes and exercising the voting rights and their respective mean scores are 4.2830 and 4.1887. Among the fisher-folk are in the age group of 30 to 40 years, the important socio-cultural empowerment are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes and their respective mean scores are 3.9726 and 3.9635. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the fisher-folk are in the age group of 40 to 50 years are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes and their respective mean scores are 4.1584 and 3.8778. Among the fisher-folk are in the age group of above 50 years, the important socio-cultural empowerment are extending the support for social causes and participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities and their respective mean scores are 3.9565 and 3.7609. Regarding the socio-cultural empowerment, the significant difference among the different age group of fisher-folk, are identified in the case of participation in social programmes, attending social functions, exercising the voting rights and attending cultural programmes since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Economic Empowerment Among Different Educational Qualification Of Fisher-folk

In order to find out the significant difference in economic empowerment among different educational qualification of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in economic empowerment among different educational qualification of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district". The result of 'ANOVA' test for economic empowerment among different educational qualification of fisher-folk is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Economic Empowerment Among Different Educational Qualification Of Fisher-folk

Economic Empowerment	Educational Qualification (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	Primary	Middle	High School	Higher Secondary	
Personal income	3.6304	3.6810	3.7306	3.9846	2.819*
Ability to save for future needs	3.8023	3.8351	3.8056	3.7073	0.203
Able to meet day today expenses for the family	3.6619	3.6774	3.6111	3.7073	0.063
Able to meet the household needs	3.5158	3.5627	3.3472	3.4878	0.488
Capacity to give education to the children	3.2264	3.1900	3.0694	3.1951	0.166
Able to meet medical requirements	3.3410	3.5627	3.4306	3.6829	1.951
Ability to spend some amount on family functions	4.4728	4.5663	4.4306	4.5707	1.705
Ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks	3.5960	3.5771	3.6111	3.3415	0.499
Capacity to repay the loan	3.5221	3.5817	3.6806	3.9902	2.870*

Source: Primary data

*-Significant at five per cent level

Table 2 shows that the important economic empowerment among the fisher-folk had primary education are ability to spend some amount on

family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.4728 and 3.8023. Among the fisher-folk had middle school education, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.5663 and 3.8351. The important economic empowerment among the fisher-folk had high school education are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.4306 and 3.8056. Among the fisher-folk had higher secondary education, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and capacity to repay the loan and their respective mean scores are 4.5707 and 3.9902. Regarding the economic empowerment, the significant difference among the different educational qualification of fisher-folk, are identified in the case of personal income and capacity to repay the loan since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Political Empowerment Among Different Educational Qualification Of Fisher-folk

In order to find out the significant difference in political empowerment among different educational qualification of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in political empowerment among different educational qualification of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district". The result of 'ANOVA' test in Table 3.

Table 3 Political Empowerment Among Different Educational Qualification Of Fisher-folk

Political Empowerment	Educational Qualification (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	Primary	Middle	High School	Higher Secondary	
Awareness about political parties	3.2960	3.3380	3.4944	4.3683	3.126*
Membership in a political party	3.3095	3.4194	3.2639	3.2195	0.526
Attending the political party meetings	3.4986	3.5054	3.4167	3.6098	0.294
Campaigning for political party candidates	3.1032	3.1505	2.7778	3.5610	2.918*
Participation in political rallies for a social cause	2.8338	2.9211	2.8462	2.5610	1.130
Participation in the election as voters	2.6905	2.8172	2.5972	2.9756	1.124
Contesting election to the local bodies	2.9656	2.9427	2.9167	2.9024	0.059

Source: Primary data

*-Significant at five per cent level

Table 3 shows that the important political empowerment among the fisher-folk had primary education are attending the political party meetings and membership in a political party and their respective mean scores are 3.4986 and 3.3095. Among the fisher-folk had middle school education, the important political empowerment are attending the political party meetings and membership in a political party and their respective mean scores are 3.5054 and 3.4194. The important political empowerment among the fisher-folk had high school education are awareness about political parties and attending the political party meetings and their respective mean scores are 3.4944 and 3.4167. Among the fisher-folk had higher secondary education, the important political empowerment are awareness about political parties and attending the political party meetings and their respective mean scores are 4.3683 and 3.6098. Regarding the political empowerment, the significant difference among the different educational qualification of fisher-folk, are identified in the case of awareness about political parties and campaigning for political party candidates since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Decision Making Empowerment Among Different Age Group Of Fisher-folk

In order to find out the significant difference in decision making

empowerment among different age group of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in decision making empowerment among different age group of fisher-folk in Kanyakumari district". The result of 'ANOVA' test for decision making empowerment among different age group of fisher-folk is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Decision Making Empowerment Among Different Age Group Of Fisher-folk

Decision Making Empowerment	Age Group (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	Above 50 years	
Education of children	2.8491	2.8085	2.8959	2.9058	0.258
Health of children	2.9057	3.1489	3.2127	3.1957	0.920
Consumption patterns	2.9245	2.8571	3.1041	2.9638	1.577
Marriage of children	2.7925	2.7477	2.9186	2.8913	0.745
Borrowing decision	2.8868	2.8207	2.8914	2.7464	0.677
Repayment decision	2.9178	3.4225	3.4072	3.5870	6.492*

Source: Primary data

*-Significant at five per cent level

Table 4 shows that the important decision making empowerment among the fisher-folk are in the age group of 20 to 30 years are consumption patterns and repayment decision and their respective mean scores are 2.9245 and 2.9178. Among the fisher-folk are in the age group of 30 to 40 years, the important decision making empowerment are repayment decision and health of children and their respective mean scores are 3.4225 and 3.1489. The important decision making empowerment among the fisher-folk are in the age group of 40 to 50 years are repayment decision and health of children and their respective mean scores are 3.4072 and 3.2127. Among the fisher-folk are in the age group of above 50 years, the important decision making empowerment are repayment decision and health of children and their respective mean scores are 3.5870 and 3.1957. Regarding the decision making empowerment, the significant difference among the different age group of fisher-folk, are identified in the case of repayment decision since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

SUGGESTIONS

- There is a need to determine the economic contribution of fisher-folk in order to enhance visibility there is a need for the sensitization of development organizations towards fisher-folk economic & financial needs.
- Improve the socio economic condition of the fisher-folk
- More governmental support mechanisms are required in income generating projects for fisher-folk especially in fisheries sector.

CONCLUSION

The assessment of the empowerment indicated that the empowerment was the most for the value added for fisher-folk. The fisher-folk were socio-culturally, economically and politically empowered. Overall the results showed that, the fisher-folk were more socio-culturally, economically and politically empowered in Kanyakumari district. Empowerment of fisher-folk can help to alleviate poverty and mobilize natural resources. Moreover, arrangement of adequate finance at market rate may contribute significant role in the socio-economic development of fisher-folk in the study area. Again financial support system needs to be dynamic so that concerned fisher folk can get the benefits of institutional credit facilities. Further, institutions involved in income generating activities and other support services should in close cooperation among themselves for development of fisher-folk.

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