

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An executive summary of the final report of work done on the minor research project of Seema Prabhu S., Department of Commerce, Canara College, Mangaluru entitled, “Ground realities of life and living of Konkani Kharvi Community: A study with reference to Konkani Kharvi women of Udupi district of Karnataka state” vide UGC letter number MRP (H) - 0841/13-14/KAMA003/UGC-SWRO Dated: 28.03.2014

INTRODUCTION

Women have the potential to change their own economic status, as well as that of the communities and countries in which they live. Yet more often than not, women’s economic contributions go unrecognized, their work undervalued and their promise unnourished. Unequal opportunities between women and men continue to hamper women’s ability to lift themselves from poverty and gain more options to improve their lives.

Participation of women in the sphere of economic activities on par with men is, therefore, necessary for the development of mankind. All talk of equality of women with men, however, would remain a myth till women become economically self-reliant. Working is one of the economic activities where women can make significant contributions. The working women improve their social status in line with the values of democratic socialism which our country is adhered to. Empirical evidence shows that women contribute significantly to the running of family business mostly in the form of unpaid efforts and skills. The value of this effort is underestimated both by the families that take it for granted and in academic studies. The number of women working is growing worldwide.

Women play an instrumental role in production and trading active ties all over the world. This contribution has further improved through the advent of globalization. Through globalization more opportunities are opening to women as some writers will argue. “Everywhere, women are overcoming traditions, customs, superstitions and prejudices and becoming major contributors in the marketplace”.

Economic growth is the result of overall sectors' development. The backbone of economic growth starts with the development of agriculture sector which provides foods for survival as well as base of development of subsidiary sectors of the economy. As far as agriculture is concerned, India is the second largest in volume of output. Certain related sectors of

agriculture have played a crucial role in the development of the Indian economy by providing employment to a number of people in the forestry, fishing and logging industries. Fish has been the most important and sustaining factor for the people around the world. It is particularly true in case of the coastal communities, as fish constitutes the most important part of their diet and also the main source of their livelihood. Fish is a major industry for the coastal people. It is a main raw material for many industries – the manufacture of fishmeal for the poultry and the production of oils of various kinds.

The role of men and women in fish production, processing and marketing differ but one cannot deny the fact that women are playing significant role in the fisheries sector. In most of the countries of the world, women have gained the knowledge to manage the small boats, to make and mend nets, to process and sell fish. It is a known fact that women are playing leading role in the development of aquaculture in addition to their role of sole household managers in most of the fisher families. These fisherwomen are engaged in several fisheries vocations. After the fish is brought to the shore, the women generally do most of the fish processing, preserving, storage and also selling the fish at the market. The major activities in which women's contribution can be noticed throughout the country are fish processing and marketing. However, their participation and contribution are increasing in the areas of aquaculture, development and education. The involvement of women in these activities generates supplemental income to support their families. However, in spite of all these, women's role in fisheries is undervalued. Even though women are as efficient as men, earnings are not always the same. The wages for men and women are often different with men being paid at least 30 % more than that received by women. The type of role the women can play and to the extent to which they can play these roles is largely dependent upon the socio cultural milieu of the society.

About the community:

Konkani Kharvi community is one of the fisherfolk of west-coast of India. From Goa to Mangalore in the south, the community is relatively small, about 50 thousand in population, in comparison to other dominant fishermen communities of the region. Their traditional occupation is fishing, marketing of fish and preservation of fish. This community is not found in any of the other occupations as they are more committed to their traditional occupation.

Origin of the research problem:

Studies on fishermen are found here and there but the studies on Konkani Kharvi fishermen community are not so far done. Due to their backwardness socially and economically, they are recognized as Other Backward Community (OBC) by the Karnataka Government under Group I. This community basically depends on fishing and leads a poor life. Kharvi women play an important role in the marketing and preservation of fish traditionally. Today the roles of Kharvi women are changing in the development scenario. There is no studies so far done on this community and even the references of this community is rarely figured in the general studies of fishermen community elsewhere in the country. This research gap motivated to choose this topic. This study will examine the research problem and find out the changes in the life styles of this community due to various factors. This study would be one of its kinds in coastal Karnataka which has multiple dimensions. This study not only analyzes the sociological view of the community, but also its contribution to the business and industries. The findings of this study has national and international relevance as no much research is undertaken on this community so far. The study also enables us to understand the economic contribution of women to the community and also to the nation.

Objectives of the Research study:

The main objectives of this study are:

- To study the socio-economic conditions of the Konkani Kharvi Community.
- To examine the role of Konkani Kharvi fisherwomen in the family.
- To find out the literacy level and empowerment status of Konkani Kharvi fisherwomen.
- To find out the occupational problems and domestic problems faced by the fisherwomen.
- To determine the contribution of Kharvi women towards the welfare of the society.

Research Methodology

This minor research is conducted through a sample survey method. A sample size of 200 respondents was selected. To study the determinants influencing factors and independent factors, a structured questionnaire was prepared. The first part of the questionnaire consist of the background information of the respondents such as age, gender, educational qualification,

occupation of family, family income, number of members in family and their place of living and business.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of the questions relating to the main purpose of the study. This part enables to the empirical study on the grass root realities of the Konkani Kharvi fisherwomen and their opinions towards their work as well the conditions of the industry. The structured questionnaire was distributed to the respondents personally by the investigator and collected their responses at their respective homes. Personal talks and exchange of information clarified the real situation of the work and contributed a lot to study this subject. Informal discussions were held with almost all the respondents. Information collected reflects the true opinion of the respondents and most of the respondents are sincere in responding.

Collection of information from the respondents were made in their own mother tongue i.e. Konkani which made the respondent more comfortable in responding to the various questions. Both primary and secondary data were made use of in the preparation of the report. The data collected were drawn into the suitable tables to arrive at the conclusions. For empirical analysis, descriptive statistical tools such as percentage and average have been applied. The entire minor research is done through the following process:

- ❖ Collection of secondary data on the subject from books, magazines, websites and newspapers.
- ❖ Collection of primary data through personal interview and written questionnaire.
- ❖ Designing the sample size to 200 families.
- ❖ Classification & tabulation of information collected for analysis and interpretation.

Area of Study:

- ❖ **This Minor research study is carried out in Udupi district of Karnataka State.**
- ❖ **Sample Design:**The sample consists of 200 respondents from Udupi Taluk and Kundapur Taluk . The respondents are randomly selected from the 10 fish landing centres of these taluks.
- ❖ Five centres from each taluk were selected for the study on the basis of purposive sampling method. Some important criterion used for selection of the fish landing centres are: maximum fish catch as per the statistics available from Directorate of Fisheries collected at the time of the commencement of this study. Moreover, they

fairly represent the entire study area. The names of the fish landing centres selected for the study are:

- In Udupi Taluk - Hejamadi, Polipu, Udyawar, Malpe, Hangarkatte
- In Kundapura Taluk - Beejadi, Gangolli, Navunda, Tarapati, Shiroor

Summary of Observations:

This study is undertaken to identify the grass root realities of life and living of Konkani Kharvi fisherwomen with reference to Udupi and Kundapura Taluks of Udupi District of Karnataka State. During the study a sample of 100 respondents in each taluks totaling 200 were taken to collect the primary data on this study. The following are the findings of this study:

1. Majority of the work force in marketing and selling of fishes constitute women from rural areas.
2. Fishing industry is labour intensive which demands unskilled and poorly paid labour force from rural areas.
3. The highest number of 28% of respondents is from 20 to 30 years of age, only 15% of respondents in the age group of 15 to 20 years, 19.5% from 30 to 40 years, 23% from 40 to 50 years of age and rest 14.5% from the age group of above 50.
4. 59.5% of fisher women having Primary and high school education. Only 5.5% of women have more than 10th standard education & 35% are illiterate women. Illiteracy and less education is one of the reasons for getting involved in fishing activities by women in the family.
5. 85% of the respondents are married and they choose selling of fish for meeting the expenses of the family besides the family commitments. Only 15% of the respondents having unmarried status, they opted marketing of fish as a part of their earning. They help family with their small earning and also save money for themselves.
6. It is noticed that majority of the respondents are in nuclear family which include husband, wife and children. 152 respondents belong to nuclear family category. 46 respondents belong to extended family which includes the aged parents, unmarried brothers and sisters along with husband, wife and children. Only 2 respondents belong to the joint families.

7. 85% of the respondents have more than 4 members in the family which indicate the number of dependent in the family are more. It is one of the reasons for the need for income in the family.
8. 88% of the respondents state that all the members of the family do one or the other occupation. Only 12% of the respondents say that they have unemployed members in the family. The majority of the respondents' family members are working either in the fishing industry as daily wage earners, self employed or outside as casual labourers.
9. Income earned by these women plays a supportive role in 85 families where as it dominates in 115 families.
10. In the present study out of the total 200 families, 129 families stay in Coastal Regulation Zone and in port areas. Even though they are residing in this area from a long period of time they don't have ownership on these lands.
11. Out of the 200 families visited, it is observed only 58 households have television sets which amounts to only 29%. The refrigerator is found in only 1 family, two wheeler or four wheeler vehicles are found in 15 families, pump sets with 8 families and telephone facility with 3 families.
12. 80% of respondent families do not possess any land and 20% respondent families are having ownership of 10 cents / 4 gunte or less land.
13. It is interesting to note that 143 respondents are involved in marketing of fish for more than 10 years, 35 respondents since 5 to 10 years, 13 respondents since 1 to 5 years and only 9 respondents since one year. Those who have experience of 10 years and more are majority in number.
14. Fisherwomen purchase fish for retail sale from various sources. 40% of the respondents purchased fishes from the market. It is significant to note that most of the fisherwomen buy fish either from the market or from other fisherwomen, fish dealer etc.
15. 54% of the fisherwomen depend upon the auto rickshaw to carry the fish to market or selling place. The public transport i.e. buses are the second important mode of transport to fisherwomen to take fish to the market for sale and usually they travel by the same bus every day. Tempo is used to carry fish baskets of large quantities. If the distance between the places where they get the fish and the market place is nearby, the women carry the fish on the head and walk.
16. It is observed that out of 200 families visited 54 families have increase in the number of members in the family is into fishing industry, 78 families have the same number

of members and in 68 families the number of members doing this work has come down. This clearly indicates that majority of the people are discontinuing fishing as their work.

17. 156 respondents say that need of livelihood is one of the reasons to take up this occupation. 75 respondents say that getting additional income is the motivation behind taking up this occupation. Only 7 respondents stated that they have chosen this occupation as a matter of convenience.
18. 104 respondents agree that there is complete encouragement they receive from the members of the family for the activities relating to fishing. But 96 respondents state that the family members discourage or dislike continuing this occupation. The normal reasons given by them are for sickness, improvement in the education level of the children and also increasing earnings of the family members.
19. 150 respondents who constitute 75% of the sample size state that they utilize the earnings for the basic needs. 34 respondents say that they treat the earnings as the additional income in the family. 13 respondents say that they utilize the earnings for the education of their children and only 3 respondents stated that they are saving the income for the future.
20. It is understood from the data and information available that 163 respondents have no problems from any side to continue the work in the family. But 37 respondents feel that due to the health problems, the increased income of the family and educated children there is an opinion to quit the job.
21. Majority of the respondents are suffering from Rheumatic complaints such as joint pain, pain in limbs etc. which are classified as occupational related illness in the study. The probable reason for the same could be because they sit for prolonged hours in squatting position. The respondents also complained of suffering from some form of gastric problems. This may be because they leave home early in the morning without eating in order to reach the landing center early.
22. It is noticed that 148 respondents say categorically that they have full job satisfaction in their work. Only 52 respondents feel that they do not have job satisfaction in their work. One of the reasons for this is most of the women involved in this work for more than 10 years and adjusted to the ups and downs of the fishing industry.
23. 118 respondents receive good encouragement from the family members regarding the work they carry out in the family. 74 respondents say that they are not happy. 8

respondents say that the other members suggest alternative form of employment to choose rather than selling of fish.

24. 87% of the respondents say that their job is better occupation than other occupation available to them. Only 13% of the respondents agree that there are other opportunities in terms of occupation available.
25. 130 respondents agree that marketing of fishes has brought a change in the lifestyles of them. Only 70 respondents disagree with this. The majority believe that their job has given them not only the work but also additional income and comforts. The income earned is used by the women to buy the household requirements as well as their personal requirements. The savings made out of the earning are used in times of difficulties and it has brought a sort of confidence with them. The earnings are also used to meet the expenditure of their children's studies and the feeling of poverty is reduced by this work.
26. 80% of the respondents say that they will continue this work throughout their life time and 11% say that they would work for another 10 to 25 years. Only 9% of the respondents state that they would work up to 10 years. These are the opinions given by the women depending up on their age, health conditions and educational qualification. Elderly women find no other alternative to the present job and like to continue in the same job till the health permits. Youngsters who have less education and do not find any other job opportunities would like to continue this work for many years.
27. 173 respondents clearly said that there is no alternative employment available to them. Only 27 respondents said that they find some alternative employment opportunities available.
28. 177 respondents say that their present job is highly essential for their livelihood and they cannot think of another occupation right now as an alternative. Only 23 respondents say that marketing of fish is not essential to their livelihood.
29. It is interesting to note that 148 respondents are having job satisfaction irrespective of job security. There is no correlation between the job satisfaction and job security. Only 52 respondents stated that they have no job satisfaction. There are 124 respondents who are fully satisfied about their work even with the awareness of no job security. Only 24 respondents feel that there is job security and also having job satisfaction. 15 respondents stated that there is job security but they have no job satisfaction. 37 respondents stated that they have no job security and also no job

satisfaction. On this analysis more number of Konkani Kharvi Fisherwomen are having job satisfaction in spite of the fact of no job security.

30. Only 50 respondents say that there is high status they receive in the family but 136 members say that their recognition in the society is average and only 14 respondent say that they receive very low status in the society.
31. It is surprising that the fisherwomen like to suggest their children, relatives and friends to continue this profession. One of the reasons underlying this opinion is the fear among the fisherwomen as to the problems referred by people. All the women wanted somebody to continue this occupation so that it plays a supportive role in income generation of the family.
32. The fisherwomen face several problems both in procuring the fish and selling the fish. Shortage of fish, availability of sufficient space in the market place, too much bargaining from the customers, payment of heavy tax, tough competition, less profit, fights with other fisherwomen, transport problem, lack of basic amenities such as water, dustbin, wash rooms etc at the market place. Many women feel that it's very difficult to deal with the bargaining everyday with each customer and shouting takes much of their stamina.
33. Even though majority i.e. 48 percent of the fisherwomen says they don't face any problems, remaining 52 percent of the fisherwomen face problems at domestic front. The unemployed children (10%), drunkard husband (12%), sickness of the husband (9%) are the major problems faced by these women at home. Besides this physical harassment by husband, extra marital affair of the spouse, no male earner at home, etc. are the other problems faced by these fisherwomen. Many of them shoulder the entire responsibility of managing the family. Like other Indian women, they have to attend to their household chores along with their fish marketing activities.

Suggestions and Recommendations

1. In every sector there is constant change and up gradation. In fisheries sector also change is inevitable. Proper training should be provided to the fisherwomen. Necessary training centres may be set up for women in different levels to provide skills through appropriate professional training on different sectors of fisheries with inclusion of capture and culture fisheries.
2. Facilities should be provided in the universities and other research and development institutions to train small groups of fisherwomen in the marketing of fish.

3. Proper infrastructure should be provided such as cold storage, processing space, transportation network, sales outlets and peeling sheds etc. under co operative umbrella.
4. Alternative jobs to be provided during off seasons. Schemes like saving cum incentives may be strengthened to provide alternative livelihood.
5. Micro level loan facilities are required and it should be distributed through nationalized banks.
6. Socio economic census for fishermen will be an effective tool for proper assessment of numbers and exact share of women in the sector. Necessary data bank may be created to formulate their development programme.
7. While making policies for fisherwomen , NGOs can play a mediator role between government and private sector.
8. A welfare board exclusively meant for fisherwomen should be introduced to look after their insurance, pension benefits, medical facilities, minimum wages, financial aids etc.
9. The fish markets and landing centres should be well equipped with the facilities like potable water, roofing, raised platforms and wash rooms to women.
10. Education to fisherwomen is must and should be encouraged.
11. Active participation of the fishing community through their own traditional organizations, in planning and implementation of development activities is needed, if they are to be successful.
12. Financial support from term lending intuitions must be extended in time to invest in deep sea fishery as well as inshore fishing.
13. Maintenance of up to date data would be helpful in analysis of the fishery sector which would enable the enforcement of measures to prevent poor fishing and to ensure maximum utilization of resources.